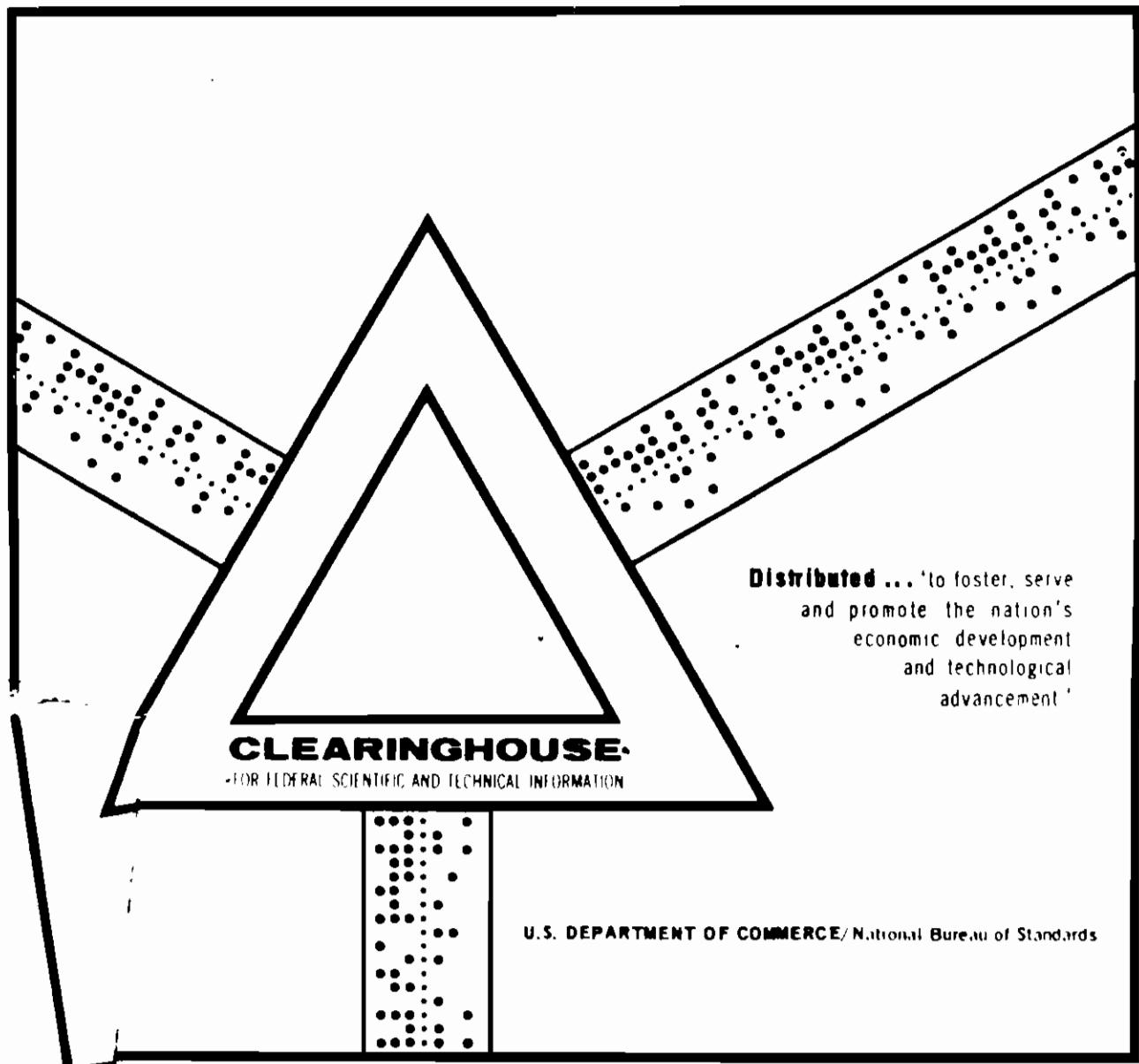


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MINORITY GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Headquarters
Department of the Army

February 1966



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Ethnographic Study Series

MINORITY GROUPS
IN THE
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

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Ethnographic Study Series

MINORITY GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

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Research and writing completed

February 1966

FOREWORD

This volume was prepared by the Cultural Information Analysis Center (CINFAC), Center for Research in Social Systems (CRESS) of the American University. It is designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, and political institutions and practices of minority groups in the Republic of Vietnam. This study seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition on selected tribal and other minority groups, as limitations on space and research time permitted. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. Extensive bibliographies are provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the study represent the work of the authors and CINFAC and do not represent the official view of the United States Government.

An effort has been made to make this study as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations, and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions and suggestions for factual, interpretative or other change as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to—

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Washington, D. C. 20016

PREFACE

CRESS, operating under contract with the Office of the Chief of Research and Development, Department of the Army, has developed through CINFAC this ethnographic study of selected tribal and other minority groups in the Republic of Vietnam. This study was prepared 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.

The task of studying these groups is a complicated one. The country is undergoing crises of various types, in the course of which the groups are more and more coming into contact with modern civilization. It is always difficult to gauge the true depth and nature of social and cultural changes: it does appear, however, that the groups selected for study are deeply involved in these changes.

The studies contained in this volume are designed to provide basic background material on the fundamental social, economic, and political characteristics of the various groups. They are descriptive reports based on secondary sources dealing with the Vietnamese society. Field research was not undertaken, although the comments of consultants and personnel recently returned from the area have been incorporated.

It must be recognized, then, that these studies are not exhaustive. There are appreciable gaps in the information, and many discrepancies in the original sources were difficult to reconcile. Further, the information contained in these studies may be outdated even before it is published and is subject to modification in the light of new developments and information. Therefore, although they contain the latest information available, and the validity of this material has been checked as closely as possible, the user is cautioned to consider these studies as a point of departure to be checked against the current circumstances or conditions of the particular area in which he is working. Extensive bibliographies are included to assist one seeking more detailed information in areas of special interest.

This volume is divided into two parts: the first containing a chapter for each of 18 Montagnard tribal groups, and the second consisting of 7 chapters covering 5 ethnic minority groups, 2 politico-religious sects, and 1 quasi-political group. The chapters in each

part are arranged in alphabetic order. Each chapter is designed to be self contained: certain information has therefore been repeated in all of the studies in order to provide in a single location all pertinent information for the user interested in only one group. Each chapter provides information on the group's size and location, historical background, settlement patterns, language, physical and psychological characteristics, social structure, customs and taboos, religion, economic organization, political organization, communications techniques, and paramilitary capabilities. There are also sections designed to assist the outsider in working with the group. Footnotes and bibliographies are included with each separate study and there is an index at the end of each chapter to facilitate the location of specific information in that chapter. In addition, at the end of this volume there is a section index for reference to general categories of information in all the chapters.

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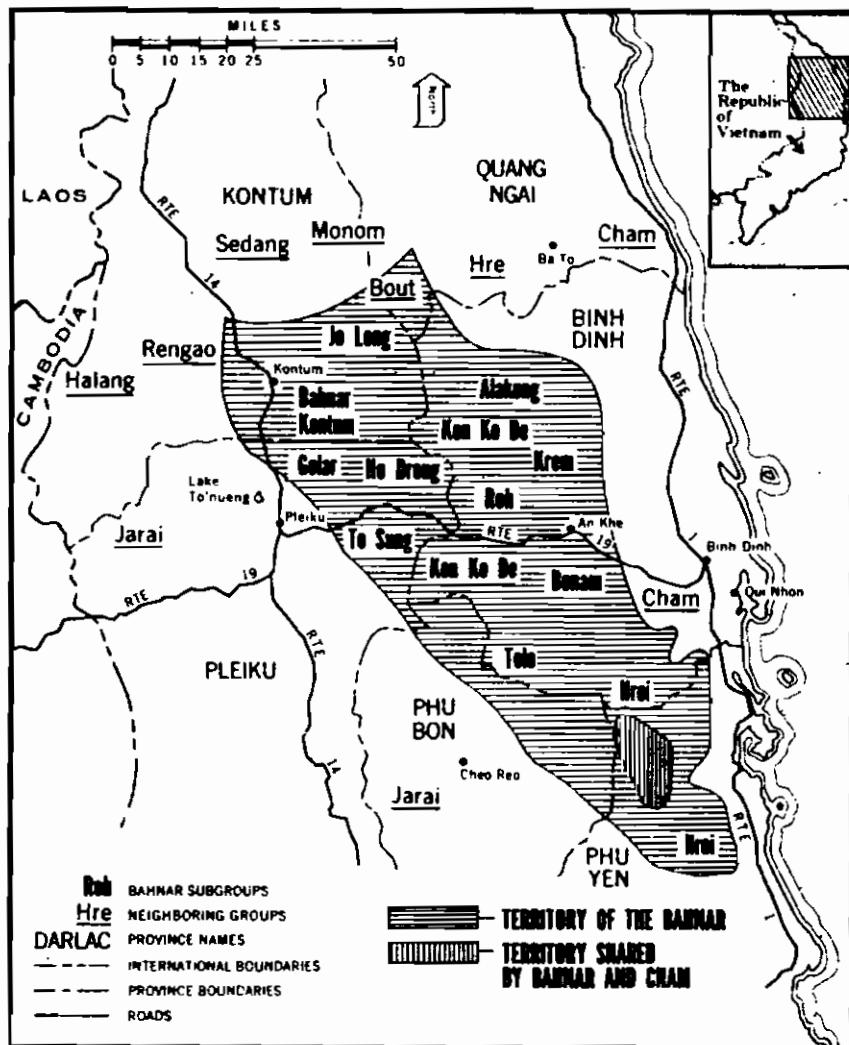
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The Bahnar Subgroups

PART ONE. TRIBAL GROUPS

CHAPTER 1. THE BAHNAR

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

The Bahnar tribes, numbering between 80,000 and 200,000, occupy a strategic area of approximately 4,000 square kilometers in the Central Highlands of the Republic of Vietnam.¹

The Bahnar dialects are Mon-Khmer in origin and are related to those of the Stieng, M'nong, and Sedang, three other important tribal groups.² Family structure is based on a bilateral kinship system, with neither male nor female dominant.³ The family and the village are the basic units of political organization. Villages are grouped into a regional association or *toring* for purposes of administering intervillage matters such as hunting, fishing, and farming rights. Clan structure or organization appears to be lacking.⁴ Extremely religious, the Bahnar interact continually with the animistic spirits surrounding them.

Names of Tribe and Subgroups

The meaning and origin of the name Bahnar is unknown. Although the precise number and breakdown of Bahnar tribal subgroups is in dispute, most authorities agree that the following are subgroups: Alakong, Bonam, Golar, Ho Drong, Jo Long, Kon Ko De, Kontum, Krem, Roh, Tolo (Tolotenir), and To Sung.* Despite the fact that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate their claims, other sources include the Cham-Hrui, Rolo, Boutes, and Rengao among the Bahnar.⁵

The various Bahnar subgroups can be roughly divided as follows: Eastern Bahnar subgroups—Alakong, Bonam, Kon Ko De, Krem, Roh, and Tolo;† Western Bahnar subgroups—Ho Drong, Golar, Jo Long, Kontum, and To Sung. The general patterns of customs and traditions differ between the Eastern and Western subgroups.

* The Hroi are also usually classified as a Bahnar subgroup. However, since the Hroi have been greatly influenced by the Rhade and the Cham, two important Malayo-Polynesian groups, this subgroup is the subject of a separate chapter in this volume.

† The Hroi would also be considered an Eastern Bahnar subgroup.

Although the differences are largely due to varying degrees of contact with other peoples, the dialects of the Eastern Bahnar are more closely related to one another than they are to the dialects of the Western Bahnar.

Size and Location of Group

Although no accurate records exist, the Bahnar population was estimated at 80,000 in 1952, but estimates for 1960 indicated that they may number as many as 200,000.⁶ They live north of the Darlac Plateau in the area comprising the western portion of Binh Dinh Province, northwestern Phu Yen Province, northeastern Phu Bon and Pleiku Provinces, southeastern Kontum, and southwestern Quang Ngai Province (see Map, p. vi).

Relationship to Other Groups

As closely as can be determined, the groups neighboring the Bahnar include: the Jarai to the west and southwest; the Rengao to the northwest; the Sedang, Monom, and Hre to the north; the ethnic Vietnamese to the east; and the Cham to the east and southeast.

Terrain Analysis

The area inhabited by the Bahnar is centered in the Binh Dinh Mountains and consists mainly of rounded hills of crystalline rock, many of which are over 3,000 feet in elevation. Main drainage is into the Song Ba River and its tributaries.

The climate of this mountainous area is influenced by both the summer (May—October) and winter (mid-September—March) monsoon winds, which provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the rain brought by the summer monsoon. The winter monsoon also provides some precipitation, although this is quite undependable. In contrast to the monsoon, during July and August excessively arid local winds are dominant. Called the "Winds of Laos," these hot, dry winds, sometimes blowing with extreme violence and provoking intense evaporation, descend the eastern edges of the Bahnar land, which slopes to the coastal area.⁷

Inland temperatures are lower than those along the coastal lowland areas, differing by more than 15 degrees during the winter months.

Much of the Bahnar area is covered by rain forest, though some savanna is evident to the south. The tropical rain forest has a three-story canopy, the topmost layer consisting of large trees whose crowns form an almost continuous canopy 75 to 90 feet high. Below this is a second canopy of smaller trees, reaching a height of 45 to 60 feet. Next is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings

of various sizes." Humidity is high, and many herbaceous plants, such as orchids, woody climbing plants, and liana, are common. The rain forest area can usually be penetrated with little difficulty.

Savanna areas consist principally of *tranh* (*Imperata cylindrica*) grass—a tall, coarse grass used for thatching roofs of houses; when young and tender, *tranh* is used for grazing. Probably repeated cultivation, fire, and poor soil conditions have created these savanna areas.

Various wild animals are found in the forests: bears, buffaloes, elephants, boars, deer, tigers, and monkeys. The forest abounds with leeches and other bloodsuckers, especially during and after heavy rains.

Transportation is very difficult in this region, particularly during the rainy season. The Song Ba River, a broad stream in its lower reaches, is seldom used for navigation due to shifting channels and variable depths. Large boats can utilize short stretches during the high-water season caused by the rain-bearing monsoon, whereas only small native craft can use the waterways at other times of the year. The Song Ba tributaries are generally navigable by only the smallest craft.

A number of roads cross the Bahnar area: National Route 14 connects Kontum with Pleiku and Ban Me Thuot to the south and runs north and east to Hoi An on the coast. An Khe is located on National Route 19, which links An Nhon with Pleiku.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The Bahnar are classified as a Mon-Khmer ethnic group in terms of language, customs, and physical appearance. The Mon-Khmer are generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated in many directions.¹

Language

The Bahnar speak a nontonal language of Mon-Khmer origin. In recent years, many new words have been introduced into the language as a result of contact with neighboring peoples.

Most Bahnar subgroups speak varying dialects reflecting the regional differences. The Tolo, Krem, and Kon Ko De subgroups speak the same dialect with local variations. With the exception of the Bonam dialect, similar only to that of the Hre people in Quang Ngai,² the different dialects are mutually intelligible among the Bahnar subgroups. The Bahnar in the border areas reportedly understand the Jarai and Rhade languages as well. French is spoken by some Bahnar, notably those who served with the French forces. Men who have had dealings with merchants, and some of the children, speak a little Vietnamese.³

In 1861, Christian missionaries in Kontum devised a written language for the Bahnar. This script, resembling the romanized script of the Vietnamese, comprised Latin characters with Bahnar variations and was taught to Bahnar children until anti-French movements within the tribe interrupted their education. Teaching of the script was resumed in 1883, and it was officially adopted in 1935.⁴ To date a number of books in the Bahnar language have been published, including dictionaries and Christian religious works translated by missionaries.

Legendary History

The Bahnar explain their origin in myths and legends transmitted orally from generation to generation. Examples of these myths are those related by the Bahnar Krem and Bahnar Roh.

The Bahnar Krem in the Kim Son area tell a story concerning the two sons of the deities Yang Bot and Yang Gia. The elder of the two sons was prone to long absences in the jungle, hunting, fishing,

and other frivolous indulgences, while the younger son was industrious and respectful to his parents. The elder son's prolonged absences saddened his mother, Yang Gia, and she died. The elder son returned home after his mother's death. His failure to understand that her death was at least partially his fault angered his father, Yang Bot, so that he struck and chased the elder son back into the jungle. Yang Bot remained on the plains with his younger son, instructing him and watching his descendants' progress. However, he began to worry about his elder son and searched for him. Finding him, and noting that this son had not progressed, Yang Bot attempted to help by giving him a language and instructing him in the use of weapons. Unfortunately, the mountain climate caused Yang Bot to become ill and to die before he could fully instruct his elder son in the things necessary for progress. Since that time the descendants of the elder son have remained in the mountains, speaking a different dialect, and have not advanced as have the descendants of the younger son, who stayed in the plains.⁵

The Bahnar Roh explain their origin in the following legend: The god Bok Kei, having created the earth, searched unsuccessfully among the lesser gods for a ruler for the earth. His two children, a boy and a girl, playing nearby, observed their father's dilemma and offered to take the job. Before sending them to the earth, the father took them on a pleasure trip to the moon. There he put each child into a drum, replaced the drumheads, and hurled the drums to earth. The drums crashed on the ground, and the boy and the girl stepped out onto a new landscape containing plants, trees, fruits, and animals. Each built a separate house in which to live on the earth. One night Bok Kei, by magic, caused his son to be transported into the bed of his daughter. In the morning, seeing what Bok Kei had done, they realized that he wanted them to live together. Soon the girl gave birth to a hundred eggs which hatched into a hundred male and female children: fifty went to live in the plains, and fifty stayed in the mountains with their parents. In this way the Roh explain the origin of the people who live in the mountains and those who live on the plains.⁶

Factual History

The history of the Bahnar tribe indicates that for several centuries they were a very powerful people. In the 15th century, the Bahnar aided the Cham in their fight against the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese); at other times the Bahnar revolted against the Cham. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bahnar forced the Khmer king to receive their envoys, evidence that the Bahnar had much power and authority in their own territory.

During the 18th century, the Laotians gradually extended their domain south into the highland area inhabited by the Bahnar.

Although they were not in complete control of the tribal area, the Laotians established several military outposts, and their claim to the territory was not challenged. In 1827, however, the Siamese conquered Laos and assumed Laotian claims to the highland areas. Siamese military outposts were established in the Bahnar area, and taxes were collected from the villages in the immediate areas of the outposts. During this period of Siamese dominance, intertribal warfare became widespread, and the Bahnar were almost eliminated by the warlike Jarai and Sedang.⁷

The Annamese, controlling the territory along the edge of the Siamese-claimed highlands, attempted to extend their influence among the tribal peoples. As part of the Annamese effort to establish their influence in the Siamese-claimed territory, in about 1843 the Annamese recognized Khiem as the autonomous leader of the Bahnar people and gave him a title in the court of Hue. After 1846, Annamese claims to the highland territory were reinforced by the establishment of military outposts in Bahnar areas only loosely controlled by the Siamese.⁸ As they secured local control through these outposts, the Annamese authorized only their own traders to deal with the tribesmen.

In addition to the disruptive influence of the Laotians, Siamese, and Annamese, in 1849 the Bahnar tribesmen were faced with a new outside force. In that year, two French Catholic priests, Fathers Dourisboure and Desgouts, founded a mission at Kontum and gave medical assistance to the tribespeople.⁹ These two priests so gained the affection of the Bahnar that when the Annamese sent troops to seize the missionaries in 1854 the tribesmen refused to guide the soldiers. When Father Guerlach arrived at the mission in 1883, there were four villages of baptized Bahnar tribesmen.

With the treaty of 1884, making the Annamese nation a French protectorate, the French assumed Annamese territorial claims in the highland region. The mission in Kontum supported French aspirations and attempted to limit the influence of the Siamese outposts in the area.¹⁰ To consolidate French influence in the area, the French in 1888 sent a soldier, David Mayrena, to Kontum. With the help of the French priests, Father J. B. Guerlach in particular, Mayrena was able to form a confederation of the Bahnar, Rengao, and Sedang and proclaimed himself Marie I, titular King of the Sedang. He appointed a tribal chief named Krui as President of the Bahnar Republic.¹¹ Mayrena then committed so many dishonest acts, such as the illegal sale of titles and lands, that he was exiled from French Indochina and died shortly thereafter.

In 1893, a treaty between the French and the Siamese marked the end of Siamese claims to territory east of the Mekong River; the highland area then officially became part of the French Annamese

protectorate.¹² The French began to consolidate their authority in the area and attempted to contain the widespread intertribal warfare. In 1897, when the Jarai attacked a supply convoy en route to the mission at Kontum, Father Guerlach called upon the Bahnar to come to his assistance. They sent 1,200 men, the largest body of Montagnards ever to put themselves under the command of one man. The Jarai were defeated, and after peace was concluded, the missionaries arranged an alliance between the Bahnar of Kontum, the Rengao, and the Bonam.¹³

In 1923, the French Government issued a policy manifesto governing the Montagnards. It was agreed that the social structure of the tribes, whether patriarchy, matriarchy, or clan, would be respected by the French Government. Certain zones were to be closed off to alien settlement; the trading of goods—salt in particular—was to be regulated. The heads of the provinces were to codify tribal laws and collect data on tribal customs, superstitions, and folklore. Tribal groups were to be permanently settled near irrigated ricefields, and special schooling in the tribal languages was to be provided. Nevertheless, French plantations continued to increase, and the tribes witnessed gradual French encroachment on their lands.¹⁴

During the Indochina War, the Bahnar supported the French. With the Geneva Agreement of 1954, the Republic of Vietnam assumed responsibility for the administration of the highland groups.

Settlement Patterns

The slash-and-burn method of agriculture employed by the Bahnar forces them to move their villages approximately every 3 years, or whenever the soil becomes too impoverished to support their rice crops. Traditionally, the Bahnar have lived in villages of approximately 200 inhabitants. Except for Plei Ba Doi and Plei Bon, centers of the Bahnar, few village populations total as many as a thousand people.¹⁵ Bahnar villages, once fortified, have in recent years been fenced to prevent cattle from wandering into the fields.¹⁶ Now, to satisfy military needs, they are again sometimes fortified. The number of houses in a Bahnar village may vary from 20 to 100, determined by the number of families living within the boundaries.

The Bahnar house, much like that of the Rhade, is rectangular and built on pilings above the ground. Oriented in an east-west direction, most houses measure approximately 10 to 14 meters by 3 to 4 meters; however, the size varies according to the Bahnar subgroup and the number of families living in the house. Sections of the house are designated for specific members of the family: the parents and infants sleep in the east wing; the center belongs to the older daughters; and west wing is reserved for young boys. If the family is wealthy, a servants' compartment may also be in-

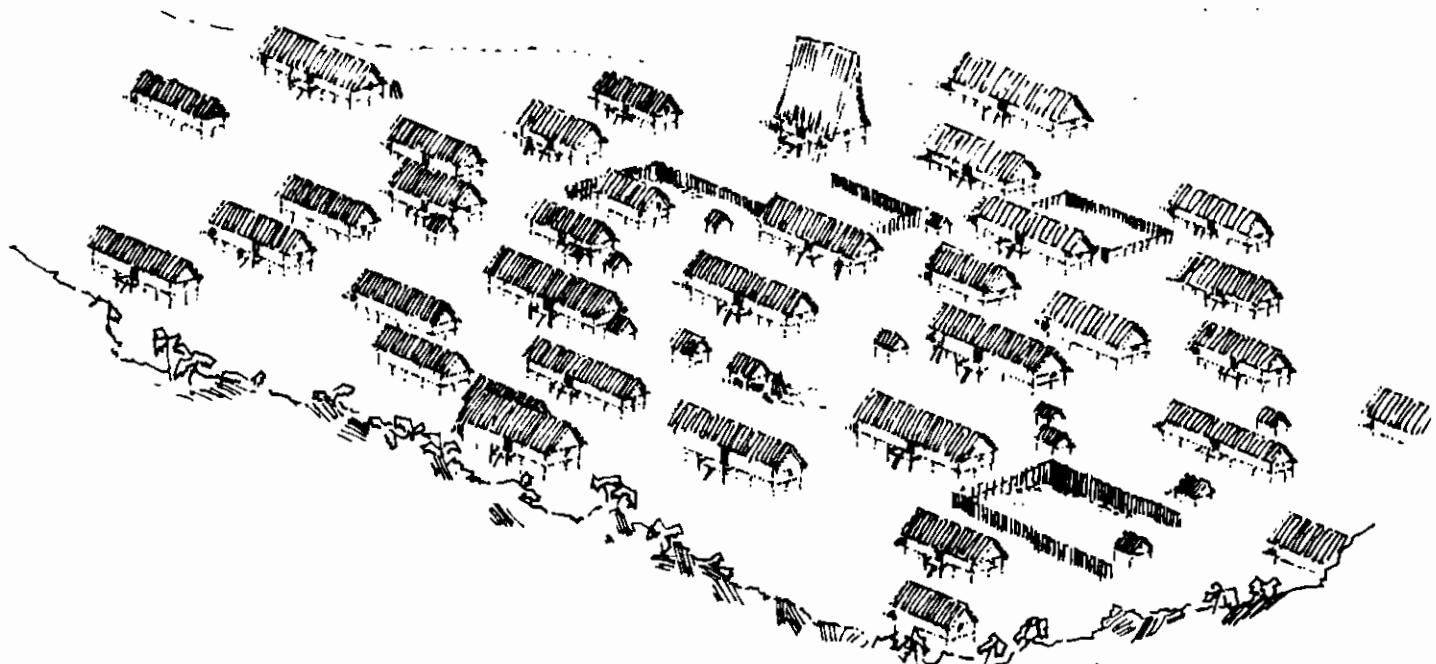


Figure 1. Layout of Bahuar village.

cluded in the west wing. The first two sleeping quarters are designated as *lam* and *hangao*, respectively. Later on, additions called *rong ngir* may be made on the western side of the building for the sons' and daughters' households. If the husband is rich enough to take a second wife, an addition is made for her; then the first wife is given her own compartment. Some variations in the construction of houses have been reported among the subgroups.

Houses in the Bonam area are built on stilts, 0.8 to 1.5 meters high (rarely are stilts more than 2 meters high), made of tree trunks. Bonam houses, measuring 8 to 20 meters long and 13.5 to 14 meters high, consist of bamboo walls, thatch roofs, and bamboo floors. Three entrances—one for welcome guests, one for the family, and one facing a sloped area, for ceremonial use only—lead into a hallway within the house. Tree-trunk ladders are used for access to the first two entrances.¹⁷ Inside the house, the hearth located on the right of the door is reserved for guests; several other hearths at the far end of the room are used by the couple and their children. Wooden shelves attached to the walls hold miscellaneous items. Baskets, used for storing clothes, and jars, containing money, jewels, and other possessions, are kept in the space opposite the sleeping area.

In the Krem area, houses are built on stilts which are shorter than those used in the Bonam area, but the houses are somewhat wider. Entrance ladders are made of woven rope, and the floor is made of woven bamboo. The main door, located in the center of the house, faces east and is flanked by smaller doors on either side.¹⁸ Unlike the Bonam house, the Krem house has no hall. The hearth belonging to the owner of the house and his wife is situated to the right of the doors; the hearths used by the married children are situated at either the left or right wall. Tool shelves, baskets, and jars are kept in sleeping quarters of the family members.

The houses of the Roh resemble those of the Krem, with the addition of a platform at the main door which faces east. Tree trunks with steps carved in them serve as ladders. Each room contains at least one hearth—a square wooden frame filled with soil—on which a stove is placed. The stove belonging to the house-owner and his wife should not be moved, as the Bahnar believe the hearth god, the principal kitchen deity, resides in the stove and should not be disturbed.

The communal house or *rong*, readily distinguishable from all other houses by its high, incurved, pointed roof, faces in a north-east-southwest direction. Among the various subgroups, the communal house may be referred to as *hnam rong*, *horong*, *wal*, or *jong*.¹⁹

Pilings, normally seven on the sides and two on either end, sup-

port the communal house with the main platform on the southwest side. The walls of the house are made of a braided wattle of whole bamboo. The long sides, horizontally bowed, include two sliding doors; the short sides are straight and without openings. The principal door measures about 2 meters by 1 meter; the smaller door at the southwest end is generally not more than 1 meter 30 centimeters by 70 centimeters.²⁰ A thick unornamented board forms the threshold.

The floor of the communal house is made of crushed bamboo planking supported by four large beams and is designed to prevent lance thrusts from below. At the door near the entrance are suspended two large drums. Small geometric figures on the beams and an occasional skull constitute the room decorations.

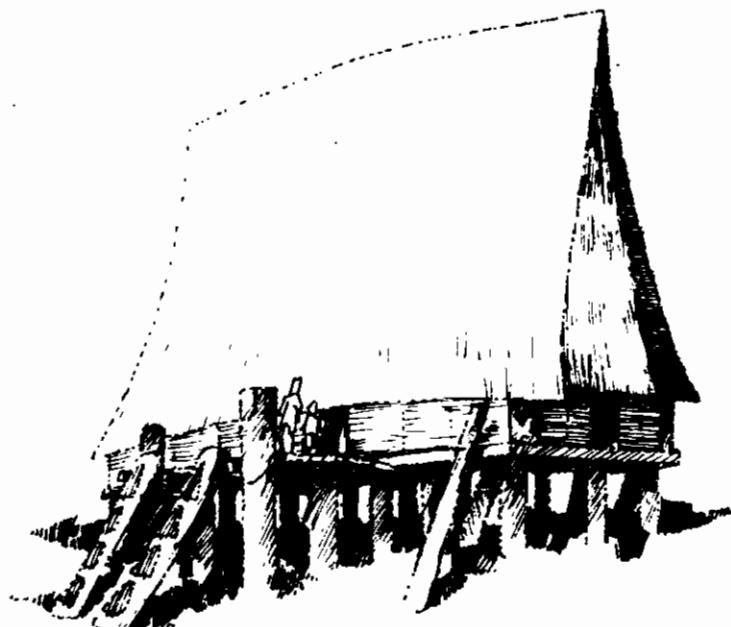


Figure 2. *Bahnar communal house.*

8 meters behind the house. In An Tuc, small structures resembling

The rong provides a sleeping place for boys from puberty until marriage²¹ and therefore is also known as the bachelors' house. In addition, the communal house, with the *cham* or village square in front, has several other uses: it serves as a marketplace and sacrificial site, as well as the reception area for receiving strangers; it is also a meeting place for the village elders, and villagers assemble here when important decisions are made. In villages lacking com-

munal houses, unmarried youth of both sexes sleep in their parents' houses.²¹

In addition to the family houses and the communal house, Bahnar villages contain other smaller buildings. In An Lao, Van Canh, and Vinh Thanh, chicken coops and pigsties are located 7 or 8 meters behind the house. In An Tuc, small structures resembling dog kennels, situated in front of the main houses, are used for keeping chickens and pigs. Generally, buffaloes are not stabled; they are tied to trees.²² The tribesmen greatly fear the danger of fire; consequently, to protect the rice reserve, granaries are located on the windward end of a village. The graveyard is usually located behind the village, but in some cases it is to one side.

²¹ See "Social Structure," pp. 15-24.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Bahnar women are small and usually have short legs, large feet, and delicate hands. Generally, the tribeswomen have long, thin hair which may or may not be wavy. Their noses are small, but their earlobes may be greatly distended by ear ornaments. The women's bronze skin resembles the color of burnt chestnut.

Bahnar men are more difficult to categorize: some are big, some small; some have very well-developed chests, and others very skinny torsos. The skin, smooth and hairless, ranges in color from light to dark brown. Although heavy beards and mustaches are greatly esteemed by the Bahnar, they themselves have only light growth of facial hair. They may occasionally be seen wearing a sparse goatee, a beard, or a thin mustache of several hairs falling from each side of the mouth,¹ but generally the men shave once a week.

While the tribesmen do not tattoo themselves, they do scarify their chests during funerals of relatives. The traditional custom of filing down the front teeth of children at puberty is probably now practiced less frequently than in the past.

Health

Most weak and sickly persons die in infancy; therefore, those that reach young adulthood are fairly robust and healthy. The average lifespan of the Bahnar is about 37 years.²

The principal disease among the Bahnar is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. The two most common types of malaria in the Bahnar area are the benign tertian form, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but usually is not fatal, and the malignant tertian form, which kills both infants and adults.³

Intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, diarrhea, dysentery, leprosy, and venereal diseases are also common, as are sores which look like yaws but, unlike yaws, do not respond to penicillin. Several factors contribute to the spread of intestinal disorders among the Bahnar. First, the tribesmen eat with their hands and do not wash them before eating. Second, dust-covered fresh fruits and vegetables,

eaten unwashed, abound in disease-causing germs. Also, the habit of not bathing their babies contributes to the high rate of parasitic infection found among the children.

The Bahnar have little understanding of biological processes. They distinguish between people whose sores heal quickly and those whose sores always become infected: the former possess "bitter blood," the latter, "sweet blood."⁵ Believing that illness is caused by evil spirits, they perform sacrifices to pacify these spirits. Sorcerers are summoned to determine the cause of illness and to prescribe appropriate rituals for the cure.⁶ Among those summoned are midwives, bonesetters, and magicians, who are always paid regardless of whether the patient is cured or not. Other healers may also be called in, but they are paid only if a cure is effected.⁶ It may be difficult for an outsider to distinguish between a magician and a healer, as a tribesman sometimes fulfills both functions.

When a child appears to be seriously ill, a member of the father's or mother's family is designated by the magician to adopt the child in an alliance called *topok*. The child then takes a name relating him to his new family. Marriage is forbidden between the persons involved in a *topok* alliance.⁷

Initially, the Bahnar were extremely reluctant to seek medical aid at government clinics: they feared dying outside the village because they believed their souls would have no homes—the worst fate that could befall them.⁸ Gradually, the overall tribal attitude has changed, and now the people generally attend clinics on a regular basis.

Considerations of sanitation have religious overtones and dictate the places for performing bodily functions. The living area must not be soiled; even spitting into the hearth is forbidden. During the daytime, bodily functions are performed outside the village fence, near a stump, a projecting rock, or a low tree limb, but far from running water. Only at night do the tribespeople deviate from this rule; then the men may urinate from the porch, and the women generally use the area under the house.⁹ In the communal house and in some of the houses of the wealthy tribesmen, wooden urinals are used.

The prohibition against contaminating water, apparently associated with a desire to maintain pure water supplies, prevents the Bahnar from washing after performing bodily functions. Traditionally, the tribesmen believed that polluting any water source physically also made the water unclean spiritually.¹⁰

The young men and women put oil on their hair, comb it carefully, and clean their teeth with a splinter of wood. As the tribespeople grow older, they tend to devote less time and attention to their grooming habits and appearance.

Endurance and Manual Dexterity

The Bahnar can carry a load weighing 20 kilograms and easily cover 10—sometimes even 70 or 80—kilometers a day over difficult mountainous terrain. The load is usually strapped to the tribesman's back, so that his hands remain free for swifter and safer traveling.¹¹

Possessing a high degree of manual dexterity, the tribesmen skillfully pursue their customary occupations with the help of only a few simple tools. Houses are constructed with only a hatchet and a knife; the land is prepared and tilled using a small ax, a pick, and a sickle; wild animals were traditionally hunted with a saber. In addition, various handicrafts such as weaving of fiber and cloth are proficiently executed.¹²

Psychological Characteristics

To understand the Bahnar, one must realize that for them all activity, even the simple act of felling a tree, involves complex family relationships and consideration of the surrounding animistic spirits. For example, before a tree can be cut down, a sacrifice must be made to the spirit of the tree. A tribesman does not make a decision on a course of action until he has consulted with members of his family, village elders, or a sorcerer. The sorcerer's purpose is to communicate with the spirits and determine their attitude toward the proposed decision.

When a Bahnar tribesman makes a promise, he will carry it out, expecting others to do likewise.¹³

Reportedly, the Bahnar are intelligent, eager to learn, and fascinated by concepts new to them (e.g., the world is round).¹⁴ Children learn quickly; they master the basic principles of reading more rapidly than the adults. The tribesmen absorb instruction more readily through demonstrations than through verbal explanations. Their interest is aroused when they can observe a series of actions producing a desired result. Adults have good memories for shapes: for example, after seeing a design in a blanket, they can weave a reproduction of it from memory.¹⁵

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Bahnar society is organized into the basic units of the family and the village. The kinship system is bilateral: lineage is determined through both the male and female sides of the family; marriage may be proposed by either the boy's or girl's family; and the young married couple normally divide their place of residence between their parents' homes until they establish their own household. Personal property is inherited by blood relatives, and common property is distributed among the surviving spouse and blood relatives.

Kinship System

The terms subgroup and tribe are applied to the Bahnar to classify them according to similar linguistic and cultural traits; however, the Bahnar have no overall tribal political organization. The basic units of societal organization are the family and the village.*

The family or *ko'tum* includes the husband and his wife (or wives), their children, and other lineal blood relatives. Based on a bilateral kinship system, descent is reckoned on both the male and female sides of the family. Men and women are regarded as essentially equal in status, helping each other in the performance of their duties, although there is a clear distinction in tasks assigned to the two sexes. People considered outside the family unit include unmarried adults, young widows and widowers, persons whose spouses have disappeared, and concubines.¹

Class Structure

The social classes among the Bahnar are *rongei*, or free men; *dik*, or people working off debts; and *tomoi*, or strangers—anyone, including a Bahnar who comes from beyond the boundaries of the *toring*, the territory possessed collectively by several villages. (Another classification, *mona*, or prisoners of war, is now outdated, since no *mona* have existed since the French pacification of the Bahnar area in the 1880's.²

The Bahnar also group people according to their maturity and their sex; they do not know and do not keep records of exact chronological age. The eight major categories, or *cal*, which the Bahnar

* See "Political Organization," p. 35.

further subdivide according to sex and status, are:¹ (1) *cal de nge*—babies; (2) *cal de hayoh*—children; (3) *cal de adruh to'dam*—adolescents; (4) *cal de po'dra*—young adults about 22 to 30 years old; (5) *cal de po'drah*—adults about 30 to 35 years old; (6) *cal de ho'moh*—adults about 35 to 40 years old; (7) *cal de moh*—adults from about 40 to 45 or 50 years old; and (8) *cal de kra*—elders above 45 or 50 years old.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Men and women, although they play different roles in the society, treat each other kindly and as equals. The role of the men includes work such as hunting, fishing, building houses and tombs, carrying on trade, and clearing the land for planting.

The role of women includes carrying water; gathering wood, edible roots, and fruits from the forest; cooking; preparing wine; weaving; and performing light farm tasks in garden plots and the ricefields.

Young children are raised permissively and allowed a great deal of freedom. Sometimes they are given small tasks to perform, such as looking after the animals; older children learn the family trade or occupation by assisting their parents.

While they live in the communal house, adolescent unmarried men engage in a number of crafts, which include making tools, traps, nets, pipes, baskets, and bamboo storage tubes for water, salt, and tobacco. Although these articles are made only by the bachelors, some can be used only by the women.

Daily Routine

An important Bahnar custom is the daily, fresh preparation of rice—their basic staple food. Each morning the tribeswomen grind sufficient paddy, or unhusked rice, to meet their family's food requirements for the day.²

The parents and children gather around the family hearth for the main daily meal around 7 or 8 in the morning. At noon no formal meal is prepared; the members of the family eat a light snack in the field or wherever they are at the time. After sunset the family again gathers around the hearth for an evening meal of leftovers. In the evening, the Bahnar socialize with their friends and neighbors, often gathering around a storyteller to listen to folktales.

Marriage

The Bahnar rarely remain unmarried, as it is considered unnatural to remain single. The burial ceremony for a bachelor is performed as cheaply as possible,³ demonstrating that bachelorhood is not esteemed.

Romantic love plays a part in the relationships between young men and women of the Bahnar. Romantic ideas are expressed in

their songs and poems." The kiss is unknown among them; when a woman unties a man's turban in public, it is a declaration of love.⁹ In some Bahnar subgroups, a couple's romantic relationship consists of talking together, picking flowers, looking for wood, meeting at festivals and songfests,¹⁰ and expressing their feelings in songs while working in the fields together. On the other hand, shy persons may merely glance amorously at one another.¹¹

However, sometimes the young unmarried of both sexes are fairly free in their sexual relations, which they conceal; for if they are not discreet and the relationship is disclosed, the pair will be held responsible for any harmful incident occurring in the village. If pigs and chickens suddenly die, the couple pay a fine to each of their parents and to the village; and then the couple must marry.¹² The fine paid to the parents is considered a compensation for the couple's failure to consult them. The nature of the fine depends upon the severity of the parents; the fine may consist of chickens or pigs.¹² If a young girl becomes pregnant, she usually marries her lover; if the man is already married, she becomes his wife of second rank. This marriage is not a dishonor nor will it hinder her later in becoming a wife of first rank.¹³

Although romantic love is significant in the courtship pattern of a young couple, the marriage bond is considered an alliance between the families of the bride and groom rather than strictly an idealistic liaison between individuals. The alliance, sealed by the exchange of gifts, signifies that the bride takes the place and title of wife of first rank in her husband's household. No alliance between families is formed when the husband takes a second wife.

There are no child marriages among the Bahnar.¹⁴ To marry, a couple must be old enough to cultivate a field—15 to 18 years—and they must have the consent of their parents. If the parents are dead, no consent is needed from any relative. Nor is consent needed if a widow, widower, or bachelor over 30 years of age wishes to marry.¹⁵ The couple should not be related by blood or by topok alliance (adoption),* as marriage between even distant relatives is considered incest. If such a marriage takes place, sacrifices must be offered to appease the evil spirits and to prevent them from harming the village.¹⁶

An engagement to marry can be sought by either the boy or the girl. In general, the wealthier person takes the initiative.¹⁷ Engagement necklaces are exchanged, but this is not a significant ceremony, for an engagement may be easily broken. However, if a capricious reason terminates the engagement, payment of a small indemnity is required.¹⁸

Intermediaries serve as witnesses during the betrothal ritual, the

* See "Health and Personal Hygiene," pp. 12-14.

marriage ceremony, the installation of the couple in their new home, and in the separation—should one result. When a marriage is being arranged, the intermediaries discuss the conditions for the marriage celebration with the families concerned. At the ceremony itself, they sip wine through a straw and ask the spirits to protect the young couple. The intermediaries witness separations, since they know which possessions each party brought to the marriage.

The marriage ceremony is performed at the house of either the bride or the groom. Both families may share the expense, or the richer family may pay the full sum. After the intermediaries have drunk from the jar of wine, the couple's attendants also partake of the wine. The families of the bride and groom contract an alliance of friendship at this time.

After the ceremony, the intermediaries install the young couple in the house in which they will live, and the attendants cook rice and a chicken.¹⁹ If the young couple have a house in good condition at their disposal, they will set up housekeeping immediately.²⁰ Since no dowry is involved, the husband's father lends him some animals when the couple set up their own household. Usually, however, for the first 2 or 3 years, the couple live with their parents, dividing their residence between the home of the wife's parents and that of the husband's parents. Trouble with in-laws frequently results. If the conflict between the couple and their in-laws is serious enough to lead to a divorce, the village elders may intervene to hasten the installation of the couple in their own house.²¹

In the Bahnar subgroups the basic marriage ritual is similar; however, differences are notable in the arrangements pertaining to family consent before the marriage and living patterns of the couple afterwards.

The Bahnar greatly respect marriage; therefore, they strive to maintain harmonious relationships between husband and wife. The traditional tribal laws regarding adultery reflect the binding nature of wedlock; however, adultery, a deviation from the marriage pattern, is a frequent cause of family discord. If a married woman commits adultery and has a child, her husband is considered the father. If a married man has a child by an unmarried girl, he pays her a fine; if he asks the girl to become his wife of second rank and she refuses, he owes her nothing. Theoretically, once the fine has been paid, the normal life of the family goes on as before. In actuality, the Bahnar can be very jealous, and adultery can produce antagonism among the persons involved.²²

Divorce and Second Marriage

Divorce is a very significant step for the Bahnar, but if a marriage is not going well, the couple may obtain a divorce. However, the elders of the village and the couple's relatives try first to reconcile

them. If a reconciliation is impossible, the divorce may be initiated by either the husband or the wife, or both, if each has good reason. Generally, the tribunal of elders has jurisdiction over divorce cases. A divorce is not granted if one party is in prison or absent. Grounds for divorce include: bigamy, repeated adultery, concubinage, refusal to have sexual relations with the marriage partner, repeated brutality and sexual aberrations, refusal to care for aged parents-in-law, and refusal to treat a venereal disease.

Custody of the children is customarily determined by their height. Children measuring the height of their mother's chest may choose the parent with whom they will live; smaller children stay with their mother.²¹ Usually, after a divorce, each partner returns to his own family and thereby becomes eligible to remarry. After a divorce, marital duties and fidelity are suspended immediately; but when one spouse dies, the surviving divorced partner still has certain obligations. He or she must make appropriate sacrifices and participate in the burial ceremony.

Among the Bahnar Roh, divorce requires appearance before the village chief. Each of the partners holds one end of a thread while a villager cuts it. If one party refuses the divorce, the initiator of the proceedings pays the contesting money equal to that spent on the wedding day and provides support for the children until they grow up. Children are usually divided between the parents. However, if the couple has children, a divorce is more difficult to secure.

For a divorce in the Bonam area, the families of both partners return to each other the gifts and money they each spent on the wedding day. In the presence of the village chief, the bride and groom return the wedding bracelets exchanged during the marriage ceremony.²²

Among the Krem, divorce is rare, as the villagers frown upon it and divorced people find it difficult to remarry. When divorce occurs, the procedure is similar to that in the Bonam area.²³

A man with a wife of first rank, that is, a wife from a family which allied itself with his family at the occasion of their marriage, may take a wife of second rank. This may occur after 10 or 15 years of marriage. The first wife may treat the second wife as an intruder, even though each has her own area in the house. To take a second wife, the husband must obtain his first wife's permission and pay her a heavy fine.²⁴ Failure to do this gives the first wife grounds for divorce. However, if the first wife is sterile, the husband can take a second wife without the first wife's permission.²⁵

A second marriage is celebrated like the first except there is no alliance between the two families. Generally, less elaborate preparations are made; the feast is smaller and fewer guests are invited. A second wife does not automatically become a wife of first rank on the death of her husband's first wife.²⁶

When a marriage partner dies, the surviving spouse is expected to remain faithful and cannot remarry until the tomb of the deceased spouse has been abandoned. The family keeps an eye on the survivor to see that he or she does not betray the dead spouse. The survivor must make the appropriate sacrifices and participate in the burial ceremonies. In addition, the survivor cannot remarry until he or she has performed a special ceremony, the *gai adro*. In the case of a divorce, this ceremony is not performed.²⁹

At the *gai adro* as practiced among the Western Bahnar, a widower gathers his unmarried sisters-in-law around a jar of wine and says, "Who wishes to marry me?" If he receives a negative reply, he gives each a token gift. A widow does exactly the same with her unmarried brothers-in-law. No ceremony is required if there are no unmarried brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law. Among the Eastern Bahnar, a widower may remarry without the *gai adro* ceremony if he had only one wife.³⁰

Property Ownership Within the Family

Property, called *to'mam* among the Bahnar, includes handmade objects, such as weapons, implements, traps, jars, gongs, houses, kitchen utensils, and granaries. Also considered property are livestock, poultry, game, fish, honey, and farm crops. The land itself is not considered *to'mam*, since it is occupied by individuals but not owned by them.

Each spouse retains title to his or her personal property, *to'mam ko'dih*, and its use. Property called *to'mam atum* consists of goods held in common by a married couple. These items are the products of their joint efforts. In the early years of marriage, the husband usually handles common property matters, but in the later years, the wife is responsible for them. Children usually have no possessions except those which they may have inherited.³¹ By the age of adolescence, young people have usually acquired some personal property.

Inheritance Customs

Upon the death of a spouse, his or her personal property, *to'mam ko'dih*, is used first to defray the cost of burial and the closing of the tomb. The remainder of the personal property is then divided among any descendants and any relatives the same age as the deceased or older.

The death of a spouse also permits the apportionment of common property, *to'mam atum*. One-half of all the goods constituting common property goes to the surviving spouse. The other half is divided among any descendants and any relatives the same age as the deceased or older. If the husband has two wives, however, the husband and the first wife are each entitled to half of the common property acquired after their marriage and to a third of the com-

mon property acquired after the husband's second marriage. The second wife has a right to a third of the common property acquired after her marriage. The deceased's share of the property is divided among members of the families involved.

Inheritances are distributed equitably to those having a traditional right to them. Among the Bahnar the eldest son is not given a larger inheritance portion; if the youngest child has cared for his parents during their declining years, he receives a larger share.³² When there are two wives, children of the second wife do not inherit personal property from the first wife; in addition, their inheritance share of common property is smaller than that of the children of the first wife.³³

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth

During pregnancy, a woman is prohibited from performing certain tasks, such as digging or filling up holes or tying knots.

Abortion is rarely practiced among the Bahnar.

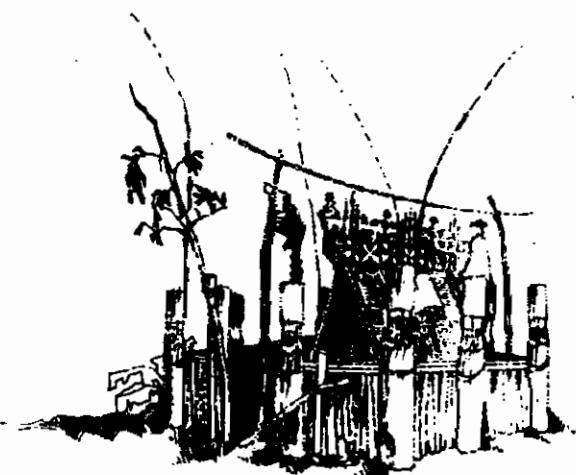
A married woman gives birth in the house near the family hearth, where a fire is kept burning. Delivery is aided by a midwife. The husband and small children may remain in the house, but adolescent boys stay in the communal house until the baby is born. An unmarried girl must give birth outside the confines of the village in the forest in order to avoid offending the spirits.

Naming the Child

At birth the baby is given the name of an unattractive object to drive away harmful spirits. The formal naming ceremony, *hlom don*, is performed shortly thereafter; the tribespeople do not consider the infant human until the *hlom don* ceremony has been completed.³⁴ In this ritual, the midwife among the Western Bahnar or the mother among the Eastern Bahnar blows into the infant's ear saying, "I blow into your ear and you must be . . ." and then listing the qualities and aptitudes she hopes the child will possess. The parents then choose a permanent name for the child, which by Bahnar custom does not indicate the family or sex and does not duplicate the name of any other living person in the village.³⁵

Child-Rearing Practices and Education

When children are 5 or 6 years old, they are usually given the duty of caring for the poultry yard. A few years later, they are given the additional job of looking after the buffaloes. Little by little, the boy begins helping his father in his work, and the girl starts assisting her mother. Children are not restricted in their behavior, nor are they segregated by sex, until they reach the age of puberty. The youngest child, regardless of sex, is expected to stay at home to care for the parents and help cultivate their land. This child may



Bahnar tomb

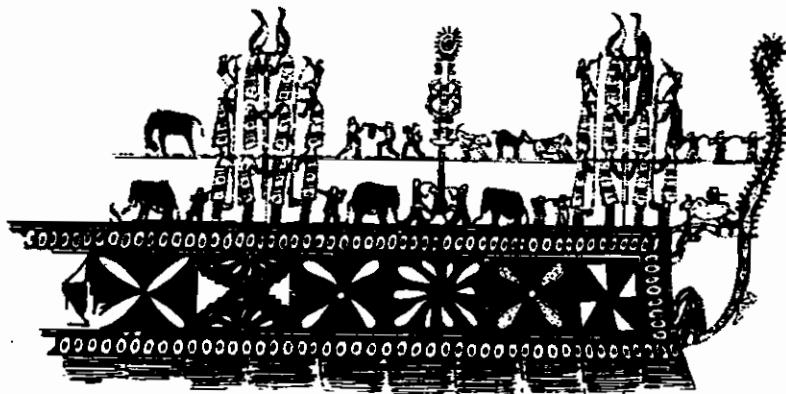


Figure 3. Bahnar tomb and detail of tomb decoration.

not marry before the parents' death but is then rewarded with a larger share of the inheritance.¹⁴

An orphan is cared for by a guardian, generally one of his uncles, who protects the child's goods and inheritance until he reaches maturity.¹⁵

In addition to the informal education of the home environment, there are local schools operated by the Vietnamese Government and missionary groups in the larger, more permanent settlements. In the former, the children are taught the Vietnamese language; in the latter, they are taught their own language.

Puberty Rites

Traditionally, when boys and girls reached the age of 14 or 15, the puberty rite of filing the upper teeth was performed.¹⁶ The lower jaw was protected by a piece of wood while the upper teeth were filed with a piece of basaltic stone. After the filing, the mouth was washed out, and the teeth were rubbed with gum from the *long hot* or *long nghik nhong* plant until the teeth were black and the pain had subsided. This custom may be dying out among the Bahnar.

When boys have reached the age of puberty, they are considered able to help their fathers effectively, and they sleep in the communal house until marriage. During this period they continue to eat their meals in their parents' house and sleep there when they are sick.¹⁷

Death and Burial

Death in a family occasions a series of ceremonies which terminate with the abandonment of the tomb.

Before the funeral, gongs are played at the house of the deceased, and the body is wrapped in mats. For the burial, customarily held at nightfall about 20 to 30 hours after the death, a funeral procession is formed. The gong players lead the procession, followed by the deceased, carried by bearers. The family of the deceased follows, wearing white clothing as a sign of mourning.

At the cemetery, the body is placed in a coffin. The surviving spouse or the oldest member of the family turns his back on the tomb, throwing dirt and pieces of wood over his shoulder onto the coffin. On top of the grave the men place jars and various implements, depending upon the sex of the deceased. Sometimes carved wooden statuettes of men or animals, varying from 2 feet to 5 feet in height, decorate the graves. The Eastern Bahnar paint their statues red and blue.¹⁸

The period of mourning ranges from 6 months to 3 years in duration. During this period, the surviving spouse is restricted in social activity and must remain loyal to the deceased until the abandonment of the tomb. During the abandonment of the tomb ceremony,

gongs are played and animals sacrificed. This rite marks the final separation of the deceased from the living, thereby ending the mourning period and its restrictions.⁴¹

System of Measurement

The Bahnar system of measurement is based on visual rather than abstract concepts. Distance overland is measured by the number of nights the tribesmen must sleep en route to their destination. Other measurements are determined by capacity or length, rather than by weight; for example, a buffalo is measured in terms of the length of its horns. Daytime is measured by the position of the sun. Nighttime is from sunset until the first crowing of roosters in the morning. The day of the month is reckoned by the phases of the moon.

The Bahnar numerical system includes the following words for the numbers from 1 to 10 and 1,000:⁴² 1—*ming*; 2—*bar*; 3—*pong*; 4—*puon*; 5—*podam*; 6—*todrou*; 7—*topoh*; 8—*tohngam*; 9—*toxin*; 10—*jit*; 1,000—*robau*.

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Customs and taboos vary from village to village in the Bahnar area. A degree of modification in adherence to tribal rituals has been noted, and change is more pronounced among the Eastern Bahnar than among the Western Bahnar. Within the Bahnar territory, change can be attributed chiefly to the contact of the tribe with outsiders and the influence of tribesmen returning from military service.

Tribal Folklore

The oral literature of the Bahnar comprises stories of legendary history, love, and warfare. In addition to the myths concerning the origins of the tribe, other stories reflect certain ideals of physical beauty for the most part alien to the tribesmen themselves. In these stories, men and women are described as having smooth white skin, long limbs, slender waists, and long hair. The narration of stories and legends provides entertainment and relaxation after dark when the day's work is done.

Dress

Although the Bahnar occasionally wear ready-made, cotton Western clothes purchased from the Vietnamese in Pleiku, their usual costume is a loincloth worn by the men and a skirt worn by the women. In cool weather, the men also wear a blanket wrapped around the body; the women, a sleeveless cotton blouse.¹ From the Jarai, the Bahnar buy cotton for their articles of clothing.

Variations of the basic Bahnar costume are found among the subgroups. Among the Bonam, the men wear a loincloth and a jacket made from the bark of the *cong* tree. On festival days, a turban is added to their traditional costume.² The women wear skirts and long-sleeved coats made from dark-blue cloth with white stripes, adorned with many buttons. Men and women alike wear glass-bead necklaces and copper or silver bracelets. The bracelets are several large rings welded together; the size and number of bracelets worn indicate the person's wealth.³ Among the Roh and Tolo subtribes, the fabric for making clothing has red stripes which run lengthwise.

In the Krem subgroup, clothing has distinctive features. The

ankle-length *yeng*, a woman's garment wrapped around the body, is usually black, with a few stripes, although it may have white flowers with a few blue or red dots for decoration.¹ There are also two kinds of women's coats: a short, sleeveless one for festival and holiday use, dark blue in color, with two blue and white flowers woven on the chest; and, for daily use, a three-quarter length white coat. Krem men wear black loincloths with white stripes. For warmth as well as for protection against arrows, men wrap themselves in long striped blankets, which are also used to cover the body when sleeping. For festivals, holidays, and market days, both men and women wear pointed turbans adorned with flowers and small bells. The men's turbans are usually made of brightly colored cloth, while the women's are black. In addition, small bells are worn around their waists, wrists, and ankles. The Krem also wear strings of glass beads and silver bracelets similar to those worn by the Bonam.

Folk Beliefs

Believing that trees, rocks, animals—in fact, all their surroundings—are inhabited by spirits, the Bahnar guard against committing acts which might offend the evil spirits. The spirits are believed to communicate through dreams and omens such as rainbows, halos around the moon, unidentifiable noises, or sneezing. The Bahnar will not work after dark for fear of evil spirits.²

The tribespeople believe that animals have an awareness of the world of the spirits; animals are believed to see and hear things that human beings cannot. Thus, the Bahnar consider actions of animals as omens: if a pig snaps at his drinking trough or a dog howls, someone may die. Some animals—the tiger, the elephant, and the rhinoceros—are influenced by the spirits more than others. These animals possess no magical powers of their own but are associated with magic derived from a spirit. For example, the tribesmen fear the tiger not only for the physical danger, but also for a mysterious power associated with it.³

The Bahnar also fear strangely shaped trees or trees with unusually large limbs.⁴ Once they feared the helicopter and performed sacrifices at its wheels to ward off harm to the village. Reportedly the Bahnar have overcome this fear; the helicopter has become associated with the arrival of food and medical supplies.

In the performance of their daily activities the Bahnar are usually restricted by tribal taboos. Silence should be maintained when tribesmen go to hunt, to war, and to find honey. A warrior may not bathe the night before going off to war, nor may a hunter eat tomatoes, eggplant, wild bananas, or meat before departing for the hunt.⁵ Women do not eat dogs, snakes, or mice because the Bahnar believe these animals cause sterility.

In addition, some villages place limitations on particular activities and foods. For example, in one village the tribespeople may wear black cloth but may not weave it. In another village, those who own a pig may not go out of doors for 2 to 3 days after the birth of a litter the number of which is larger than the owner's family.⁹

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Anyone not belonging to the *toring*—the territorial administrative unit comprising several villages—is considered a *tomoi*, or stranger. Treatment of *tomoi* varies with the local history of antagonism and warfare. However, a visitor from another village with which there is an alliance will be treated as a guest, will be welcomed in the common house, and will be offered wine to drink. Visitors with large beards have special appeal to the *Bahnar* because they fit the tribal ideal of masculine power. Fair white skin and rosy cheeks are also highly regarded by the tribespeople.

Although reportedly reserved and taciturn towards strangers, the *Bahnar* do welcome guests and invite them into the common house for a meeting with the people. In some *Bahnar* subgroups, depending on the wealth of the village, wine is served.¹⁰ The tribespeople are hospitable; however, outsiders are considered as a possible danger to the relationship between the villagers and the spirits. Any misfortune occurring in the village while outsiders are there will be attributed to them.¹¹ To prevent a stranger from stealing a *Bahnar*'s spirit the tribesman licks his thumb and brushes it over his heart.¹²

Traditionally, an outsider wishing to settle in a *Bahnar* village had to locate his house just inside the fence surrounding the village. The villagers would observe him and would watch for signs of the spirits' displeasure, such as crop failure or sickness. If, after 2 or 3 years, no harm resulted from his presence, the outsider would be permitted to settle nearer the center of the village. This settlement practice may have been modified in recent years.

Eating and Drinking Customs

Ordinarily rice is cooked only for the first meal of the day; however, if unexpected guests arrive, more rice is prepared. Cooked rice is served in areca leaves or in baskets with salt.¹³ Other foods prepared include manioc leaves and roots, cabbage, and leaves of a vegetable called *ranh*. Customarily, the *Bahnar* do not use eating utensils; they prefer to eat with their fingers.

Special preserved or pickled foods, prepared for guests and festivals, include fish, meat, and manioc leaves. The preservation of fish or meat involves salting, covering the food with leaves, and allowing it to age. Manioc leaves are pounded, salted, and placed in jars to ferment. These preserved foods, as well as boiled chick-

en, are considered delicacies and are served only when honored guests are present.

A variety of wines and water are the principal beverages. Wines are generally prepared by fermenting paddy (unhusked rice), rice, millet, manioc, and potatoes. The drinking of wine is believed to bring the tribesmen into a more favorable relationship with the deities and therefore plays an important role in ceremonies and festivals.* During ceremonies, the tribespeople gather around a jar of wine, an elder tribesman offers a prayer, and then a long straw for drinking the alcohol is passed from person to person. Singing often accompanies this ritual.¹⁴ The Bahnar drink water from wells or springs which, traditionally, have been carefully guarded against pollution.

Customs Relating to Animals

Domestic animals are usually raised in pens or small huts near the house. Buffaloes—which are neither yoked for work nor stabled—are tied to trees at night for safekeeping.

The Bahnar religion requires the offering of many sacrifices in accordance with prescribed and traditional procedures. The buffalo is the most important sacrificial animal; goats, pigs, chickens, and eggs follow in order of descending importance. Sometimes goats may be substituted for a few, but not all, of the buffaloes required for a large sacrifice. The liver and blood of a sacrificed animal are reserved for the spirits of the ancestors.¹⁵

Animals are also used as a measure of value: prices and fines are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, pigs, or chickens. Buffaloes needed by an individual or a village for sacrificial purposes may be obtained through trade.

* See "Religious Ceremonies," p. 30.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The Bahnar believe that spirits inhabit all parts of their world—all animate and inanimate objects. Living in constant interaction with these spirits, the tribesmen continually attempt to appease the spirits and to avoid actions which might anger them and bring misfortune upon the tribesmen.

According to the Bahnar, the universe is divided into three worlds. The first world consists of the earth, plants, animals, men, and the stars. The second world is that of the *kiak*, or ancestors, and includes any objects or sacrificed animals which have been placed on the tomb of the deceased. The third world is that of the spirits.

Spirits may be invited to enter the first world; for example, certain spirits are invited to Bahnar celebrations or sacrifices. Spirits also have the power to enter the first world uninvited: a spirit may appear as an apparition. Man contacts the ancestral spirits in the second world through dreams. The Bahnar believe that when a man dreams, his essence, *po'hngol*, enters the second world and comes into direct contact with the *kiak*, who may either help or harm him. Dreams, therefore, are of great significance to the Bahnar.¹

Principal Deities

The Bahnar deities are the spirits of the third world. These are called *yang* for males and *ya* for females. To indicate respect, male spirits are addressed as *bok* in prayers.² Spirits of the third world are thought to have their own property—houses, beasts, and personal objects. They may leave their world to enter the first world to receive offerings due them.

Principal Religious Holidays

The three major Bahnar festivals are the new year's festival, which occurs during the 1st or 2d month of the lunar year; a 4-day festival before the land is cleared for cultivation; and a 7-day festival after the crops have been harvested.³

At festivals, the Bahnar sacrifice buffaloes and various other animals; they then eat the meat and drink wine. Reportedly, in recent years the number of Bahnar festivals has been declining.⁴

Religious Ceremonies

Every act in the lives of the tribesmen is ruled by their religion. Bahnar patterns of religious behavior encompass many taboos and sacrifices* and are passed from generation to generation. Religious observances, although some local variations exist, are generally the same for all the subgroups.¹

Any violation of the religious rules of conduct is considered to offend both the ancestors and the spirits of the third world and to cause sickness or misfortune. The site of the offense and any witnesses are also stained. A man is responsible to the spirits for offenses committed in his home by his relatives and by his ancestors.

Sacrificial ceremonies are always conducted by the person who offended the spirits. *Phah* are brief sacrifices, and *soi* are full-scale sacrifices to powerful spirits. When a sacrifice is offered—whether in a house, at a tomb, or in a field—the liver and blood of an animal are presented to the spirits. After a prayer to the spirit, the celebrant drinks from a jar of wine and then passes the straw to his wife and to the other members of the family group. In addition to the sacrifice of atonement, a purification rite must be performed before the daily routine can be resumed.

Tribesmen are careful not to arouse the spirits. To clear a field, they will first break off a few branches to see if the spirits object; if no sign appears, they can clear the land. To avoid offending the spirit of the rice, the women do not grind more rice in the morning than the family will eat during that day.²

Religious Practitioners

The offering of a sacrifice involving an offending individual is performed by that person, whether male or female, rather than by a special religious practitioner. However, if the person is too sick to offer the sacrifice, a substitute of the same sex and same household is permissible.³

Sacrifices celebrated on behalf of the village are held in the communal house, or in front of it. The village elders lead the wine-drinking ritual, followed by the household heads and the other village men. Women do not participate in village sacrificial rites.⁴

Sacrifices connected with the construction of a new house are conducted by the man designated as the household head, assisted by his wife. The household head also conducts agricultural ceremonies; after he has pronounced an invocation to the spirits, his wife sips the wine, and then she passes the drinking straw to the other members of the household.⁵

* See "Health and Personal Hygiene," p. 12; "Marriage," p. 16; and "Death and Burial," p. 23.

Missionary Contact

The Catholics have had a mission in the Bahnar area since the middle of the 19th century. Reportedly, in 1940 there were approximately 25,000 Catholic Bahnar. These tribesmen have modified, but have not abandoned, their traditional tribal rites. The Protestant Christian and Missionary Alliance also has a mission in the Bahnar area; however, little is known about its activities.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Bahnar have a subsistence economy based upon agriculture. Their primary occupation is the cultivation of upland rice by the slash-and-burn technique. The plot of land or *ray* is farmed for approximately 3 or 4 successive years and then abandoned. The land is allowed to remain fallow to regain native vegetation, while the Bahnar move to new land; at a later time, they return to cultivate the fallow field. The cultivated rays are not necessarily near the village; they may be located some distance away as the nearby soils become exhausted.

New sites and locations for rays are chosen by the headman, usually together with the village elders and a sorcerer. The vegetation is inspected to determine the prevailing soil conditions.

Some occurrences—for example, dreams of particular animals or the appearance of certain birds on the site—are regarded as signs indicating whether the land will be fertile. In the case of adverse signs, the tribesmen may consider an area taboo and will not cultivate it.

Early in the dry season or late in the wet season, the trees—except for the largest—are felled, leaving stumps of about 1 to 2 feet. The dense vegetation is cut to the ground and allowed to dry in the sun before the burning time—usually a month before the next heavy rains begin. After a field is burned and has cooled, the tribesmen clear the debris, leaving only boulders and stumps. The layer of fine ash from the burned vegetation is subsequently washed into the soil by the rains. When the first rains loosen the soil, the men make holes for the seed rice with dibble sticks; the women follow, planting and covering the seeds. Except for some weeding done during the growing season, the land is then left without further attention until the harvesting.

During the dry season brush fires are started to clear away the forest around a dwelling, allowing the new grass to sprout, providing food for the cattle, and enabling the Bahnar to track down and hunt animals more easily.

Upland rice is the most important and the preferred crop. Secondary crops, including corn, squash, yams, cucumbers, eggplant,

and tobacco are grown in the rays in alternate rows with the rice or after the rice harvest, or in kitchen gardens. The corn and squash are commonly used to feed the livestock; however, if the rice yield has been low, these vegetables supplement the diet of the tribespeople.

The Bahnar diet is further varied by shoots, edible leaves, fruits, and herbs collected by the women. The women also turn up the earth with a sharp stick or small hoe to find edible roots and tubers. With the help of dogs, they catch lizards, rats, snakes, squirrels, and birds. The women also gather pitch from trees to be used as a fuel for illumination.

The Bahnar supplement their basic subsistence with hunting, fishing, and a limited amount of trade. The tribesmen like fresh meat and soups made from the entrails and blood of animals. Formerly they depended much more on hunting than they do at present. Many areas with game have been taken over by outsiders, and game, once plentiful, is now becoming scarce.¹ Only the men engage in hunting, and most tribesmen possess great skill in tracking and stalking game.

Pigs, chickens, and goats are raised primarily for blood sacrifices in various tribal ceremonies, but are occasionally slaughtered for food. Buffaloes are also kept primarily for sacrificial purposes.*

The villagers also fish. A method frequently used involves drugging the marine life by placing a narcotic in the water. Men, women, and children alike help to haul in the netted fish. Another method—catching and scooping up the fish in baskets—is used only by the women and children.

Special Arts and Skills

The Bahnar engage in numerous crafts, skillfully using simple tools. Basketmaking is the chief craft and is carried on to some degree in every village. Bahnar baskets, very well designed and executed, are woven from very thin strips of rattan. Bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood are woven into matting, partitions and walls for buildings, traps, pipes, nets, weapons, and containers for water, salt, and tobacco. Most of these articles are made in the communal house by the bachelors of the village. The women make pestles and some fishing baskets. Customarily, only men build tombs, coffins, and boats; men also gather honey from wild beehives. Some men are also skilled blacksmiths, while others specialize in repairing nets and gongs.²

The women weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton, ordinarily using four sets of threads shuttled through a light weaving loom simply constructed from several pieces of wood. The fiber from

* See "Customs and Taboos," pp. 25-28.

which the thread is made is seldom grown locally—it is frequently obtained in trade with the ethnic Vietnamese.

Local handicrafts reportedly are declining because the tribesmen can obtain through trade imported articles similar to those previously made in their villages.³

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have recently become acquainted with a monetary system, the Bahnar still depend heavily upon a barter system of trade. Prices are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, jars, gongs, weapons, clothes, and other objects.

The Bahnar trade animals and forest products, especially alleged aphrodisiacs, with other tribal groups and with the ethnic Vietnamese. In return, the Bahnar obtain salt, metal goods, cotton, gongs, and jars.⁴

Property System

Land ownership is reckoned by *toring* associations, an arrangement under which the territory within several villages is collectively administered by these villages. A *toring* controls collectively the farming, hunting, and fishing rights of the villages within its territorial boundaries; however, the *toring* does not serve as a political unit. Outsiders, whether Bahnar or not, are expected to obtain permission from the elders of the *toring* association to engage in any activity governed by the *toring*.

Although land is not owned by individuals or families, cultivators of a particular field—whether the field is currently in use or fallow—are recognized by the villagers to have a preemptive right to that specific area. These rights are well known and respected within the *toring* association.⁵

Ownership of property by individuals and by married couples was discussed earlier in this study.*

Distribution of Wealth

Although money is becoming increasingly important to the tribesmen, wealth is usually measured in terms of buffaloes, gongs, and jars.⁶ Most villages have several wealthy families who constitute the sociopolitical elite. Servants usually work a year for a rich family and in return receive food, housing, clothing, and sometimes a small sum of money. The wealthy also employ agricultural workers, who are paid a portion of the harvest.

* See "Social Structure," pp. 15-24.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The village is the highest political unit among the Bahnar; there is no political organization at the tribal level. Comprised of several villages, the *toring* appears to function largely for the administration of fishing, hunting, and farming rights, with no apparent political implications.

A Bahnar village is best described as an association of extended families having common interests and often interrelated. Political authority is exercised by a council of elders and a village headman, the *kra*; the former is composed of elders—the oldest male household heads in the village—and the latter is elected by the elders. Usually the position of *kra* is handed down from father to son; nevertheless, formal election by the elders is necessary.

The traditional responsibilities of the council of elders and the *kra* include the administration of the village, the protection of its inhabitants, and the organization of village rituals.¹ The *kra* also represents the elders in affairs outside the village.

The authority of the elders and the *kra* is limited within the village by the power and influence of the eldest males of the various extended families. Family problems are resolved by the family heads, while violations of village customs and conflicts between families and between villages are handled by the village elders.

During the French administration, Bahnar functionaries were selected from the influential families of a *toring*. The position of district chief was often held by a Bahnar, while the resident province chief was usually French.² The Bahnar continue to draw a sharp distinction between traditional headmen and those functionaries who emerged under the French rule.

The Vietnamese Government supervises relations between tribal villages. A Government representative works with each group of seven or eight villages; the villages, in turn, are represented by their headmen.

Legal System

Traditionally, tribal laws were unwritten: taboos and sanctions were known and respected by all tribal members. There is a strong spirit of conformity in each village, the sanction of the community

acting as a deterrent to violators. Resolution of disputes and determination of punishment for violations are the affairs of both family and village. For example, if the relationship of a boy and girl creates talk, the elders may inform the couple of the villagers' dissatisfaction.

Under the French, a special system of courts was established on the village, district, and provincial levels to adjudicate tribal matters. A village court had jurisdiction in the village, passing sentence on local matters. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction; these court members handled only tribal matters.³

Under the French, cases unresolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened the first 7 days of every month. The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. In judging the cases before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.⁴ Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople 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 the Vietnamese Government has been taking action 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 Government efforts to politically integrate the tribespeople into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this decree, courts responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards, will be established at the village, district, and province levels.⁵

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.⁶ When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved, thus eliminating the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be reached, the case may be referred to a higher court.⁷

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 will include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.⁸

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."

Subversive Influences

The main objective of Viet Cong subversive activity in the Bahnar area is to divert tribal support and allegiance from the Government to the Viet Cong. Other important Viet Cong objectives in the Bahnar territory are to control Routes 14 and 19 and to maintain supply lines through the Bahnar area.

The usual Viet Cong method of subversion is infiltration and an attempt to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. The subversive elements identify themselves with the villagers by helping with village and family projects and by giving medical aid. A thorough knowledge and observance of tribal customs help the Viet Cong gain the confidence of the tribespeople. For example, Viet Cong agents have been known to file their upper teeth in the Bahnar manner to identify themselves with the tribesmen.

After the suspicions of the villagers have been allayed and their confidence won, the subversive elements begin an intensive propaganda program directed against the Vietnamese Government. Individual tribesmen are then recruited and trained for various support or combat missions with the Viet Cong.

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong often resort to extortion and terror in an attempt to intimidate the tribespeople. The Viet Cong may coerce the Bahnar into passive support so that they refuse to cooperate with the Vietnamese Government; or the tribespeople may be forced into active support as laborers and sources of materiel.¹⁰

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of information dissemination in the Bahnar area is word of mouth.

No information is available at this writing concerning the number of radios in the tribal area or the degree of Bahnar familiarity with them. However, radios are probably no less rare among the Bahnar than among other tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Any radios operating in the Bahnar area could pick up broadcasts from Saigon and provincial radio stations.

Wherever feasible, short movies in the Bahnar language covering simple subjects could be an effective means of communication.

Written communication might be effective, since the Bahnar do have a written language devised by missionaries. A limited number of the Bahnar tribesmen can read, and they could communicate the information contained in written materials to the other tribesmen. Information concerning the use of printed materials was not available at this writing.

All information should be oriented toward the principle of improving conditions among the Bahnar as villagers, rather than as individuals, because the tribesmen have a strong communal feeling. Information programs should be couched in terms familiar to the tribesmen; they should be connected with projects explicitly beneficial to the village to elicit cooperation. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and community development are possible themes.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Bahnar religious, social, and cultural traditions. Because of the Bahnar political structure, all initial contacts should be made only with the tribal elders and the kra. It is also essential to psychologically prepare the Bahnar to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village oriented and prefer to remain isolated in their traditional way of life, the Bahnar respond most favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasizing ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, political ideology, or individual benefit. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained: the Bahnar resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of the Bahnar into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and some attempts to educate the Bahnar tribesmen. These programs have not been wholly successful because of the isolation of the tribesmen, their traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese, their stubborn adherence to traditional ways, and Viet Cong interference by subversive agents.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in planning and implementing projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by the Central Government or by 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. Projects using familiar materials and products, as much as possible, are more easily accepted by the tribesmen than projects requiring the use of unknown materials or devices.

3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Bahnar encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
 - a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
 - b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
 - c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
 - d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
 - e. Control of insects and rodents.
 - f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
 - a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
 - b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
 - c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
 - d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
 - a. Improve village sanitation.
 - b. Provide safe water supply systems.
 - c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
 - d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
 - e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
 - a. Provide basic literacy training.
 - b. Provide basic citizenship education.
 - c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Bahnar have a reputation as skilled and capable fighters, both offensively and defensively. They pride themselves on their skill as hunters. The Bahnar are capable scouts, trackers, and guides, and if given intensive modern training, support, and leadership, they could become exceptionally effective in jungle combat.

The territory inhabited by the Bahnar is one of the most strategic in the Republic of Vietnam. Viet Cong supply lines run through the Bahnar area, and the presence of the Viet Cong in comparatively large numbers is a constant factor in the day-to-day lives of the tribesmen. The Bahnar have been forced, under threat of terror and reprisals, to give the Viet Cong support in the form of food, finances, and labor. When the tactics of subversion, propaganda, and simple cajolery fail to subdue the Bahnar, the Viet Cong resort to murder and other brutalities.

Although the Bahnar have a reputation for being aggressive and canny fighters and reportedly display initiative and sophistication in defending themselves, they are often coerced into cooperating with the Viet Cong. Unless given Government training and support, the isolated Bahnar do not have the means and backing to withstand Viet Cong hostility.

Organization for Defense

The Bahnar village has a traditional organization for defense against surprise attack. The communal house, normally used as the sleeping place for the bachelors of the village, is in addition a stronghold for defense in terms of warfare conducted with lances, knives, and crossbows. From the communal house, the Bahnar warriors can effectively defend the village. Formerly, Bahnar villages were surrounded by a stockade, but in recent years these have been replaced by fences. Due to increased military activity within the area, more secure perimeter defenses are probably now employed.

The Bahnar determination to defend themselves is strongly influenced by their estimates of probable success. If faced with superiority in numbers or weapons, the Bahnar may capitulate rather than fight. This characteristic is not unique to the Bahnar;

rather, it is common among people inadequately armed, trained, and led.

Inclination to Fight Aggressively

Although the Bahnar prefer defensive to offensive warfare, they have a reputation for engaging in aggressive warfare if provoked. They have reportedly been capable of mounting well-organized attacks on distant villages.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The Bahnar have traditionally relied upon spears, swords, crossbows, and poisoned arrows as weapons. They are also well acquainted with the use of traps, pits, and spiked foot traps (concealed sharpened sticks). Some Bahnar have been trained in the use of modern weapons and have had military instruction from the French, Vietnamese, and Americans.

Because of their relatively small physical size, the tribesmen are more comfortable and adept with small light weapons than with heavier ones. The tribesmen can handle large weapons that are easily disassembled and quickly reassembled. Traditionally, the Bahnar take good care of their weapons; if they can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, they will generally use it well.

The Bahnar are less proficient in the use of more sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, because of their difficulty in understanding the more theoretical and technical aspects of timing and trajectory.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

Like other tribal groups, the Bahnar learn more readily from actual demonstrations of techniques and procedures than they do from standard classroom methods. Tribesmen with military service under the French are an asset in the training and instruction of younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE BAHNAR

Every action of the Bahnar tribesmen has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Bahnar may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesmen, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Bahnar are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Bahnar village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Bahnar. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of an individual Bahnar. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the appointed village chiefs should receive 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 Bahnar should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used, because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. A gift or invitation to a ceremony or to enter a Bahnar house may be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
4. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Bahnar ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
5. An outsider should never enter a Bahnar house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior.
6. Outsiders should not get involved with Bahnar women.
7. The Bahnar are generally eager to learn; however, teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible, identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Bahnar believe all objects in their world house spirits.
3. Do not mock Bahnar religious beliefs in any way: these beliefs are the cornerstone of Bahnar life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Bahnar property and village animals with respect. Any damage 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.
2. Difficult, rigorous work should be done in the morning, from dawn to 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. The Bahnar are accustomed to eating their main meal around 7:00 to 8:00 a.m., and this should be taken into consideration when planning the morning's work.
3. Learn simple phrases in the Bahnar language. A desire to

learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Bahnar are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Bahnar areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

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7. H. C. Darby (ed.) *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 56; Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, July 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]
8. Kopf, *op. cit.*; Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-81.

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3. Rev. David Frazier, Interview, May 1964. [Missionary; 5 years of service in Vietnam, mostly among the Bahnar.]
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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
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8. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
12. Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
13. Bourotte, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-99.

15. Frazier, *op. cit.*
16. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
17. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
19. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 500.
20. H. Parmentier, "La Maison commune du village bahnar de Kom-braith," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), p. 223.
21. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
23. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Notion de beauté du corps humain chez les Bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), pp. 251-52.
2. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-14.
3. Frazier, *op. cit.*
4. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 402.
5. Frazier, *op. cit.*
6. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 523.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
8. Frazier, *op. cit.*
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11. *Ibid.*, p. 403.
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13. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.
14. Frazier, *op. cit.*
15. *Ibid.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

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VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

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IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No Footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No Footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

No Footnotes.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE BAHNAR

No Footnotes.

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