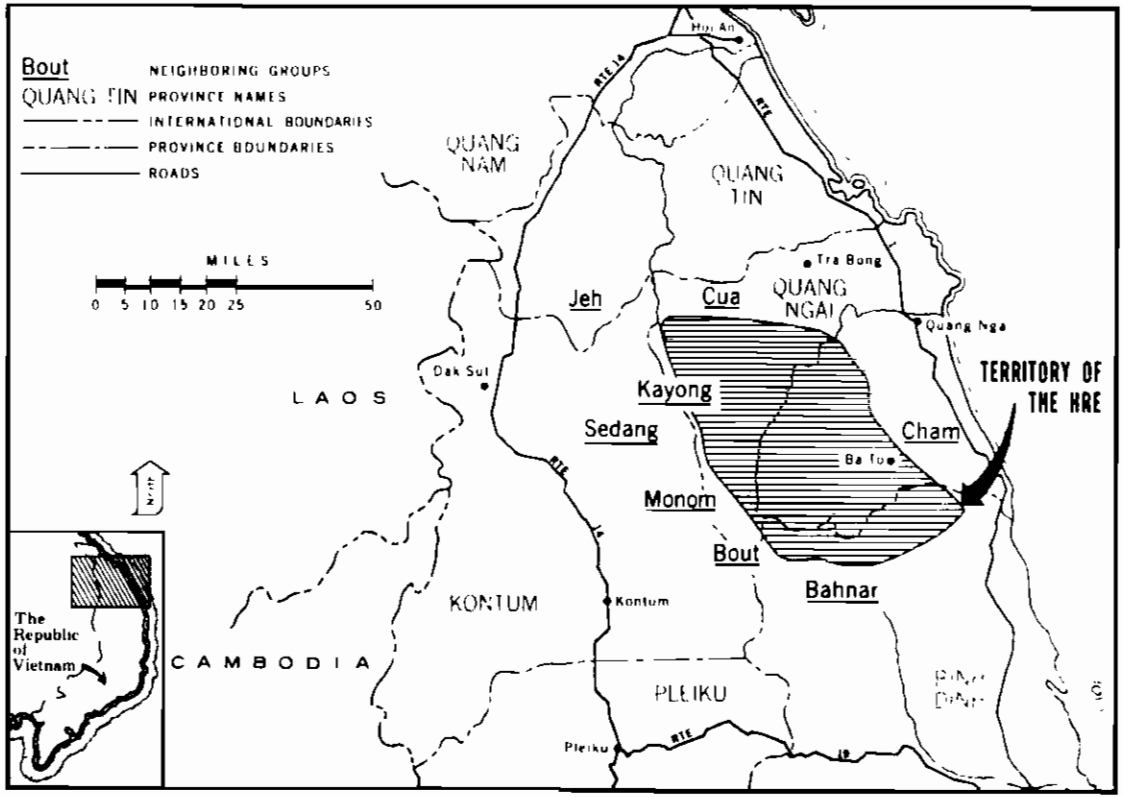
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TERRITORY OF THE HRE
KONTUM
Kontum
CAMBODIA
PLEIKU
Pleiku
The Republic of Vietnam

The Hre

CHAPTER 5. THE HRE

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Hre are one of the largest Mon-Khmer-speaking Montagnard tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Estimated to number at least 27,000 and perhaps as many as 210,000 persons, the Hre live in both the river valleys and highlands of Quang Ngai Province. The highest order of political organization among the Hre is the village unit, although in the past they have combined into larger groups against Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) aggression. Shared language, customs, and traditions are the major factors uniting these autonomous villages into an identifiable tribal grouping.

Hre families are patriarchal, and kinship is reckoned along the male line. Their religion is animistic and involves belief in good and evil spirits which dwell in both persons and the natural environment. When traditional customs have been violated or ill luck strikes, animals are sacrificed to placate these spirits.

Many Hre are sedentary and practice irrigated wet-rice agriculture; the remainder are seminomadic and practice slash-and-burn agriculture.

Name and Size of Group

The name Hre is used to describe the large tribal group which inhabits the river valleys and mountainous areas to the west of Quang Ngai. Although the Hre use the term to mean only those members of the group who live along the Song Re or Hre River, the term Hre is used by outsiders as the generic name for the entire group. Hre subgroups are named after rivers in the tribal area: the Dvak, Kare (Kha-Re, Kre), Tava, and Ba Vach or Ba Voch.[1] Although these names are used by the tribesmen, the only division of the tribe commonly used by outsiders is that of highland and lowland groups. The highland Hre inhabit the isolated mountain areas and the upper reaches of the numerous rivers of the area while the lowland group inhabits the remaining areas of the Hre territory.

Although the exact population figures are not available, the Hre are one of the largest Montagnard groups: estimates vary from

27,000 [2] to as high as 210,000,[3] with the most probable estimates ranging from 90,000 [4] to 120,000.[5]

Location and Terrain Analysis

The Hre are concentrated in the river valleys of the eastern part of the Annam Cordillera in Quang Ngai and northern Binh Dinh Provinces. To the east, they overlook the lowland coastal delta regions; while to the west, the Hre live in sparse settlements in the mountains almost as far as the Massif du Ngoc Ang and the Plateau of Kontum.

The coastal lowlands to the east and northeast of the Hre are inhabited by ethnic Vietnamese. To the north are the Cua; to the west, the Sedang; and to the south, various Bahnar groups. These three tribal groups have languages, customs, and economic conditions which differ from the Hre, especially the lowland Hre.

The Hre area is a remnant of a series of eroded plateaus dominated by high isolated peaks, some as high as 5,400 feet. The area consists mainly of slate, shale, schist, and other friable rocks. The plateau rises quite sharply from the narrow coastal plain and has many river valleys, some broad and meandering. The rivers, however, are short and swift, with varying currents and depths—a consequence of rain-bearing monsoons and typhoons.

The summer monsoon (May–October) and the winter monsoon (November–January) provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer, these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. The eastern portion of the region has the most rain from September to January, while in the western portion the rainy season occurs during the summer months. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the monsoon-borne rain. Precipitation is high—averaging more than 80 inches in the lower elevations and more than 160 inches in the higher areas. Normally the weather is warm and humid, with frequent cloudiness, especially from January to April, in the eastern foothills.

Temperatures vary by roughly 15 degrees between summer and winter. Actual surface temperatures average 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in winter (January) and above 80 degrees Fahrenheit in summer (July).

Typhoons, occurring between July and November, also influence the climate. Preceded by high winds and cool, dry weather, the typhoons bring heavy rainfall, sometimes lasting 24 hours, that often floods and uproots the forests. However, intensive typhoons rarely reach the western part of the Hre area.

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area rain forest vegetation of two distinct belts. At the higher elevations is the first belt, primary rain forest, where the trees of an average height of 75 to 90 feet form a continuous canopy. Below

this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest, and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.

The second belt, or secondary rain forest, which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

The secondary rain forest is an especially unhealthy malaria area. Malaria, rather than the dense forest or the warlike tribes, has inhibited deeper Vietnamese penetration from the east. Despite proximity to one of the most densely populated Vietnamese areas, there has been little migration or settlement of the foothills and mountains of the Hre area—except for former military colonies.

Few roads exist in the Hre area. A main road extends from Mo Duc, on National Route 1, to Kontum through Ba To and Gia Vuc. Formerly a bumpy path, this road was paved in the middle 1950's. A narrow and tortuous road, this highway is not dependable, as the Viet Cong frequently damage it. Other roads or trails (which will accommodate jeeps) extend from Quang Ngai to Ba To and from Quang Ngai to Gia Vuc, along the Song Tra Khuc River.[6]

Trails are few, difficult to traverse, and are almost invisible from the air. Horses are used to transport goods; bicycles are a popular means of travel in the lowlands.[7]

Rivers are, for the most part, impassable. Even during high water, only very small boats and canoes can navigate the rivers. During low water seasons, the riverbed reveals many impeding rocks. Additional hazards to water transportation are typhoons and monsoons.[8]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: the Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Hre belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping. Indochina has been a migratory corridor for centuries, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the Upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated through Indochina.[1] The Hre are descendants of these ancient Mon-Khmer migrants. Some investigators consider the Hre a subgroup of the Sedang, but most scholars regard the Hre as a separate ethnic group.[2]

Language

All Hre speak the same basic language, which may vary in accent and dialect from village to village. The Hre language is closely related to Bahnar (the principal trade language of the area) and is classified as a Mon-Khmer language.[3] The Hre of the Lien and To River areas are also said to speak Cham.[4]

Hre has been described as easy to learn. "R's" are stressed even more strongly than in the French language, and frequently the Hre sound like Europeans.[5] Their language is primarily monosyllabic, as are other Mon-Khmer languages, and contains many words derived from Vietnamese and Cham. This borrowing is less evident among the Hre who have little outside contact.

All Hre tradition is transmitted orally, as they have no written form for their language. Recently, a writing system was devised for missionary work, but the extent to which the Hre utilize this written form of their language was not reported.[6] Currently a thesaurus, a glossary of terms and materials comprising an introductory course in basic Hre, has been translated into the Vietnamese and English languages.

Many Hre, especially the lowland Hre, speak Vietnamese and Bahnar and some speak Cham.[7] At least one authority considers

the Hre to be poor interpreters; nevertheless, Hre tribesmen have been used by U.S. personnel as interpreters.[8]

Legendary History

Hre legendary history begins with a creation story. Long, long ago, some people and animals were born. Then came a great fire, burning everything on earth—even the mountains. This was concurrent with, or followed by, a great flood which covered all the earth except for two mountains, the Goong Din, or East Mountain, and the Goong Dom, or West Mountain. On the Goong Din there remained 100 Vietnamese: the remnant of a people who lived in boats. On the Goong Dom only a woman and a dog remained, eventually mating. They had a son who, by mating with his mother, produced the Hre tribe. Their descendants multiplied and finally separated—one half going to live in the lower fields, the other half to live in the mountains. Thus the Hre explain the numerical superiority of the Vietnamese and the geographical location of the lowland and highland Hre.[9]

Factual History

Little is known of the early history of the Hre, but they have long inhabited the mountains and plateaus of Central Vietnam. At least as early as the 11th century, they came under the domination of the Kingdom of Champa and were involved in the constant wars between Champa, Cambodia, and Annam. Not until the reign of Le Thanh Ton of the Tran Dynasty of Annam (1471), when the Cham were decisively defeated by the Annamese, were the Hre free of Cham domination. The Annamese occupied Champa territory as far south as Cape Varella, which includes present-day Quang Ngai Province and surrounding areas.

In 1673 the Annamese empire was divided into two separate kingdoms: the north was ruled by the Trinh family and the south was ruled by the Nguyen family. Hre territory (administratively named Tran Man by the Annamese) fell under Nguyen rule.

Although the Annamese continually tried to administer and to assimilate Hre lands—at least those parts adjoining the coastal plains—other important internal struggles diverted their attention. An annual tribute was exacted, and an occasional expedition was sent into the tribal territory, but the Annamese did not really gain control over the Hre area until the beginning of the 19th century, when Gia Long ascended to the Annamese throne.[10] At this time, the pacification of the area was entrusted to the military, and the area was reorganized administratively. In 1819, the Annamese military built a defensive wall, the Son Phong wall, from Tra Bong through Song Ha and Binh Long, east of Ba To, and on up to Nuoc Giap. Adjacent to the wall were military forts

to prevent local rebellions.[11] Young Hre were conscripted into the Annamese Army.[12] Repeated rebellions and terrible wars devastated Hre territory, particularly in the Ba To region.

In 1863, spurred by local rebellions, the administration tightened its control of the area. Additional forts, with thousands of Annamese regular troops and local Annamese levies, were established. Under harsh rule, the Hre area was relatively peaceful.

French pressure compelled the Court of Hue to abandon special control of this area in 1904. The area was then absorbed into several existing Annamese provinces. Previously, the French had established posts in An Lao (1900), Ba To (1901), and Tra My (1902). The Hre fought French control; however, their antiquated weapons allowed only local harassment.[13]

In 1945, the Japanese disarmed the French military and imprisoned all the French. The Viet Minh, taking advantage of this, occupied the larger towns of Quang Ngai Province. Pushing into the interior, they at first achieved the neutrality of the Hre, either by propaganda or by force. Then, establishing their administrative center in Ba To, the Viet Minh suppressed all resistance and set up active control and pacification of the valley country of the lowland Hre. By bribery, they gained support of some Hre chiefs.[14] The young Hre were conscripted; those opposing the Viet Minh were carried off for forced labor in the coastal salt marshes.[15] With the Hre men either in Viet Minh military units or imprisoned, ethnic Vietnamese settled alongside Hre settlements to take over and to farm Hre land.

In 1949, the surviving Hre chiefs called on the Hre in Viet Minh units to mutiny and desert with their arms and equipment. The country rose against the Viet Minh. At a prearranged signal, the Hre massacred all Vietnamese men, women, and children in the area. In all, some 5,000 settlers were mercilessly killed, thrown into the rivers, or burnt as offerings to the spirits of the earth and sky, while Vietnamese houses were looted and burned.[16]

Fearful of Viet Minh revenge, the Hre warriors surrendered to French outposts, requesting their armed aid. The Viet Minh quickly reacted and mounted reprisals. Taking advantage of the absence of the Hre warriors, a Viet Minh regiment reoccupied Hre territory, looting, massacring, and burning in revenge. Most Hre responded with guerrilla warfare. Other Hre joined the French-sponsored Doc Lap Hre (Hre Independent Movement). Nevertheless, not until the 1954 Geneva Agreement did the Viet Minh relinquish control of the Hre valley country.[17]

Settlement Patterns

The lowland Hre rarely migrate, as their eastern valleys have long been fertile and productive. The highland Hre, however,

practice slash-and-burn agriculture and are migratory. Ordinarily they remain in the same location for 2 or 3 years before moving on to clear another plot of land. Within 5 to 10 years, depending upon how quickly a fallow field regains fertility, the tribesmen return once again to recultivate it. Originally the Hre may have lived in the adjacent coastal areas, probably being forced into the uplands by the Annamese conquest of Champa and its territory in the 15th century.

Although Hre abandon their villages in periods of epidemics, they usually return to them at a later date.[18]

Hre villages are generally built near streams or river water; when this is not available, they will be located near spring water. If neither a stream nor a spring is available, wells are dug.

To carry water from a stream to the village, a pipe of bamboo or areca palm trunk is laid. A terminal stone basin is constructed to receive the water in the village. Often measuring from 1.5 feet deep and 6 to 9 feet in diameter, the basin is used for bathing, laundering, and drinking. The Hre always keep the basin clean and free of all debris and animal remains.[19]

Lowland Hre villages are located on the side of a hill, overlooking the fields below. These villages, usually more densely populated, comprise from 10 to 20 houses, each containing from 5 to 15 members, depending on the wealth of the family. Reportedly, some wealthy families have as many as 30 members. Some Hre towns are said to have up to 200 members.[20] Houses are surrounded by gardens of areca palms; fruit trees, such as pamplemousse (grapefruit), orange, jackfruit (breadfruit); beans; manioc; and corn. The Hre do not build communal houses.[21]

In the highlands, Hre houses are more scattered and a village may consist of only two or three houses. Many rugged Hre areas are completely unpopulated. In the populated areas, many houses stand alone on the steep slopes of a ridge overlooking grassy fields; few have gardens. Isolated houses, usually accessible from only one path, are often protected by a double bamboo palisade with two sturdy bamboo gates.

Hre highland houses are built on pilings about 7 feet high. Normally occupied by an extended family, the house measures from 18 feet to 45 feet long. Houses as long as 100 feet have also been reported. A family's wealth is, in part, measured by the length of a house.[22] A heavily thatched bamboo and rattan-tied roof slopes down on two sides; walls and floors are constructed of braided bamboo; entry is by a bamboo ladder or a thick log into which steps have been cut.

Hre houses usually have two verandas—open, roofed porches—with stairways. Measuring 9 to 12 feet in length, the verandas

connect with the interior of the house by a door of bamboo or thin wood strips. The front veranda or *ben chin* is a reception room to welcome guests, whereas the rear veranda or *ben gioang* serves as a family recreation area and as a workroom for the servants. The ben chin veranda serves as a parlor and is thus neater and larger than the ben gioang veranda. The Ca Ra subgroup of the Hre have a post, about 21 feet high, set in the middle of the veranda for wine drinking, while the other Hre tie their wine jug to a corner post of the ben chin. Guests normally sleep on the ben chin. Only when there is threat of danger from wild animals do guests sleep in the house.

Doors are usually of bamboo strips tied and bound with rattan, although some houses of the wealthy have handsomely carved wooden panel doors. Ordinarily, doors are adorned with chicken feet, fishtails, and feathers to ward off evil spirits.[20]

Hre houses vary in size and number of rooms depending upon the wealth of the family. Wealth and status are, in part, measured by the number of family members living under one roof. In houses owned by wealthy Hre tribesmen, each nuclear family (husband, wife and children) is provided with separate quarters. A second wife also requires her own room and fireplace, as do married children and servants.[21]

The room next to the ben chin veranda is considered sacred; here only the master and mistress of the house, with their small children, may sleep. This sacred room also contains the sacred mortar used for grinding rice. The fireplace in the sacred room is used only for cooking sacrificial food and may be touched only by the master of the house. Both mortar and fireplace are fixed in their places. Two cords hanging over the fireplace signify the family is temporarily absent. A broken mortar means the family has moved away.[22]

The number of fireplaces in a house is another index of the wealth of a family. A poor family may have only one or two hearths; a middle-class family, three or four; and a wealthy family may have several. Each fireplace pierces the floor, has four supporting posts, is square or rectangular, measures about 2 feet in width, has a wooden frame, and is used for cooking.[23]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Hre have been described as having lighter colored skin than neighboring tribesmen.[1] They are stocky and very muscular, with dark eyes and straight, long hair. In the past, the Hre practiced the custom of dental mutilation by filing the front teeth; today, however, only older members of the tribe have filed front teeth. Reportedly some Hre also scar their legs in time of mourning.[2] Nearly all Hre chew betel, which discolors the teeth.

Health

The health of the Hre who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary.

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

The three types of typhus found in the Hre area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[4]

Also prevalent in the tribal area are cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations.[5] These diseases are spread by insects (including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse), by worms (including hookworms), and some are associated with poor sanitation and sexual hygiene.[6]

Nutritional diseases are widespread. A deficiency of thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin A and vitamin C has been reported; but intake of niacin, calcium, and iron appears to be satisfactory.[7] Severe periodontal diseases are common, resulting in loss of teeth or teeth becoming too loose for chewing.[8]

Hre water sources are usually superior to those of many Montagnard groups, for the Hre keep their water free of impurities.

The Hre associate illness with evil or angry spirits, and believe in treatment by numerous "cures" and sacrifices. For a minor illness, the sacrifice may be only one chicken; for more serious illnesses larger sacrifices are required. If an illness is not cured by the offering of a chicken, then a pig or a goat is sacrificed. Finally, when all else fails, a buffalo is sacrificed at a site outside the house, in the forest, or at the entrance to the village. If this fails to cure, the Hre resign themselves to inevitable death.[9] If a child has convulsions, a dog is killed and its blood offered in sacrifice.

Sorcerers, or *ba giau*, both local and itinerant, are the only persons allowed to offer sacrifices for illnesses, for they are believed to have the power to intercede with the spirits. To the sorcerers, the spirits give permission to administer medicine concocted from the various roots and leaves of the forest.[10]

When a Hre is sick, a member of his family cuts off the feet of a young chicken and places them in boiling water. The sorcerer then divines the cause of the illness; that is, he determines which spirit has been offended and what sacrifice must be offered.[11] The sorcerer may also set up a fragile altar (surmounted with frizzed pompons of bamboo) near the house and offer bits of rice and chicken to the spirits.[12]

The Hre believe that a certain type of stone will stop bleeding. This stone is first wet with water and then rubbed in the wound.[13]

Endurance

The Hre display considerable physical endurance; they can travel swiftly, even over mountainous terrain; they can lift heavier weights than can most members of other tribal groups.[14]

Psychological Characteristics

Although the Hre are not necessarily aggressive, they are fiercely independent and are accustomed to fighting for their tribal independence.

The Hre are hospitable and generous; they openly express their friendship, and among the tribespeople friendships are enduring and very close.[15] They apparently participate wholeheartedly in all events, whether drinking, singing, or dancing. The Hre realize wine may remove inhibitions, for they say, "When the wine goes in, the words come out."[16]

Except in the case of feuds, the Hre are apparently concerned only with the present.[17] This fact influences their conceptions of personal belongings and wealth: they have little conception of saving goods, and they establish value more in terms of use and status today than in terms of requirements in the future.

Hre women, especially the younger ones, reveal a preference for ornate jewelry and bright colors, a preference not shared by the men.[18]

The Hre do not easily forget injustices done to them and may show a strong hatred and desire for revenge. They are patient in seeking revenge, for they believe that only a foolish and angry man would fight against superior odds. If the wronged person dies before he is avenged, his children and grandchildren continue the feud. Feuds seldom occur in the lowland areas today, but they are apparently still frequent among the highland groups.[19]

Outside observers have reported that the Hre bear pain with considerable stoicism.[20]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Hre society centers around the village and family, rather than around the tribe or clan. The extended family is the common unit; a village usually comprises one or more extended families. A village chief and a council of elders provide leadership. Occasionally, a chief may usurp power and rule as a despot.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

The Hre family is patriarchal; that is, the eldest male is the supreme head of the extended family. Reportedly this is given as the reason that a Hre never strikes his wife or children.[1] A married woman is the most respected female, while a widow is almost completely ignored.[2]

Hre adhere to a strict division of labor between the sexes. Women fetch water, fish, gather bamboo shoots and vegetables, transplant and thin ricefields, and grind rice. Men hunt, clear and plow ricefields, gather honey, and build the houses.[3]

Hre law and custom sanction polygamy. Customarily, a second wife is taken only if a first wife is barren; in that case, the consent of the first wife is not necessary. However, if the first wife is pregnant or is capable of childbearing, her consent is necessary.[4]

Marriage

Although women have an inferior status in Hre society, marriage customs are somewhat matriarchal. It is Hre custom, for example, that the groom's family pay for the wedding.[5] It is also customary for a newly married couple to stay with the wife's parents for the first few years of their marriage.

Ordinarily, Hre marriage customs are simple, with couples often marrying because of mutual attraction. During a preliminary courtship, the boy and girl learn each other's age and genealogy and become acquainted; then they inform their parents and ask for counsel. There is little fear that parents will oppose a marriage. The two families celebrate the marriage agreement with a drinking session, as they shuttle back and forth between the parents' houses. The host family offers the other family certain

commemorative items, such as clothing and necklaces. The entire village is invited to the wedding, the accompanying sacrifice, and the drinking session.

Occasionally, young people do marry without the consent of their parents. In this case there is no ceremony or drinking party. Instead, the couple build their own house in the village and live alone.

To cement family friendship and cooperation, marriages are often arranged before children are born. When the children are grown, the marriage is consummated, even if there is a great discrepancy in age. Sometimes a partner in a prearranged marriage is a mature adult by the time the marriage partner is born and must wait for the child to grow up. Before the actual wedding, the consent of the couple is asked. If one person refuses, the pledge can be broken, but compensation must be paid by the family of the person responsible.[6]

A newly married couple usually stays with the wife's parents until 1 or 2 children are born and live. The young couple may then either establish their own home or, if the parents are wealthy, elect to reside permanently in the parents' house. However, if 3 or 4 children die in the home of the parents, the couple will move because several deaths would indicate that an evil spirit resides there.[7]

Divorce and Second Marriage

The Hre recognize divorce; the most common causes are inequality of age or lack of consent of the boy or girl in a prearranged marriage. When breach of promise occurs before the wedding, the party responsible must make restitution with one or two pigs and wine for the entire village. In instances of separation of a couple who have lived together, the indemnity is one or two buffaloes, depending on the family's position.[8]

Widowed spouses may remarry 1 year after the death of their spouse. All that is then necessary is the payment of a buffalo and approximately 3/10 of an acre of land to the village.[9] Remarriage for widows is difficult, though necessary; not only is a widow virtually ignored, but often she has no help for farming her ricefields. Only a poor young man or a servant is willing to wed a widow; this results in oddly matched couples with great age differences. If the second husband of an old widow is a young man, she may be compelled to find a second, younger wife for him, who then helps with the household and farm tasks.[10]

Adultery and Incest

To the Hre, adultery is a serious violation requiring village intervention to punish the guilty. The penalties for adultery are one

buffalo or five copper pots, or a lesser fine of three copper pots paid to the offended party or to the village. If one adulterer is unmarried, the fine is only one pig.[11]

Incest is also a serious offense among the Hre. The Hre believe that incest will not only bring misfortune to the guilty party, but that the offense will also bring disaster to the village. Sacrifices imploring the pardon of the spirits are required to avoid such disaster. After the sacrificial ceremony, the property of the parents of the guilty pair is confiscated and divided among their relatives. The offenders must publicly apologize to the village; they must eat from a trough used by pigs; and then the despised pair are banished from the village. In former times, the penalty for incest was death.[12]

Pregnancy and Birth

Among the Hre pregnancy is considered honorable, while barrenness is likened to moral death.

Birth procedures vary according to location: there is one procedure for lowland women and another for the highland women. In the lowlands, a Hre woman has her baby in her house, assisted by a midwife who, according to ancient tradition, cuts the umbilical cord with a sacred knife. If the birth is difficult, the village sorcerer sacrifices a pig or a chicken. No medication is used during the delivery, although as soon as the baby is born, and for 3 days thereafter, the mother drinks a little water containing salt and a concoction made from forest plants.[13] The mother also abstains from eating meat for 15 days after the birth. Three days after the birth, the mother may bathe in clear water, and after 5 days she returns to her usual tasks.[14]

In the highland Hre areas, birth itself is considered a contamination and thus occurs in the forest away from the village and its inhabitants. The mother delivers by squatting on the ground. Several old women, acting as midwives, assist the mother and pick up the child when it emerges. The baby is immediately washed in water, and its umbilical cord is tied and poulticed with herbs. The afterbirth is buried secretly by the mother, who also wipes her body with leaves, grass, or old rags. Then the mother wraps the child in a piece of cloth and takes it to separate quarters in the house set aside for women with newborn children. The mother remains there for the month required for purification; her husband can visit but does not stay with her.[15]

Newborn infants are breast fed and are never given the milk of an animal. If the mother dies, the child is placed with a wet nurse. Should a wet nurse be unavailable, the infant is fed a powdered rice mixture. When the child is older, he is fed unground cooked rice.[16]

Usually a month after birth, on a fixed day, the father takes the

child and presents it to the village. The sorcerer officiates at a special altar, on which are placed meat, rice, vegetables, wine, and tobacco in the hope that wandering spirits will be satisfied and will participate in the presentation celebration.[17]

Naming the Child

At birth a child is given a false name to mislead evil spirits; the Hre believe that a child uninitiated into special rites will, while sleeping, reveal his given name to evil spirits, who use this knowledge to harm the child. Parents reveal the real names to their children when a boy is approximately 8 years of age or when a girl shows signs of puberty.[18]

Family names are Vietnamese in origin, dating from the reign of Emperor Tu Doc in the late 19th century. To facilitate Vietnamese control, all young lowland Hre males were required to register. Since Hre family names are difficult to transcribe into Vietnamese, the Vietnamese wrote down only personal names, placing a group name in front of these. In the Nam Ngai area, before each personal name is the word *binh* or soldier; thereafter Binh became the family name of all Hre in that area. In the mountains of Binh Phu, the word *man* (pronounced "mong") was applied to those Hre.[19]

Death and Burial

The Hre announce death by sounding gongs. Relatives, friends, and even strangers will come to offer condolences, to weep, to feast, and to drink to the point of intoxication. The wealth of the deceased determines how elaborate the burial feast is. In a rich family, six or seven buffaloes may be sacrificed; a poor family may offer nothing more than a pig.[20] Poor families keep the corpse for a day and then bury it. Rich families sometimes keep the corpse for 3 or 4 days before burial. On the appointed day, the corpse is carried to the village cemetery, where a coffin has been placed next to the open grave. For the burial of a wealthy tribesman, the burial site is covered by a miniature thatched house. Poor families inter their dead, while wealthier families sometimes place their dead in elaborate, above-the-ground tombs. The coffin is a hollowed tree trunk of *loang lang* wood, a species resistant to decay. Personal artifacts of the deceased are placed over the body; then the coffin, sealed with beeswax and resin, is suspended over the grave.[21]

According to the Hre, the dead still own a share of all their family goods. Approximately a square meter of riceland is symbolically allotted to the deceased: this so-called ghost field may not be entered or cultivated. Once the deceased's property has been distributed among his family and the feasting over, the grave site is permanently abandoned.

In the highland areas, the consecutive deaths of three or four members of a family are interpreted as an omen from the spirits requiring a change of dwellings. If a village is cursed with five or more deaths within 1 month, the village itself will be abandoned. The lowland Hre, in such instances, however, do not abandon their homes; instead they offer sacrifices of buffaloes or pigs.[21]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Hre activities are governed by numerous customs and taboos. Prescribed methods and procedures govern everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Hre have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Hre are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contact with objects or animals that they believe might displease the spirits. Tribesmen in regular contact with outsiders may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as those living in greater isolation.

Dress

The dress of the male lowland Hre has been greatly influenced by outsiders, especially by the Cham with whom the Hre trade. The lowland Hre wear black shorts or trousers and a short black jacket. When they are out-of-doors, a few wealthy and influential men wear a skirt under the jacket. Most clothing is bought secondhand in the market towns or is obtained through trade with the Cham.[1]

Some of the highland Hre still wear a loincloth, while others wear the black shorts and a brief black jacket. A locally woven blanket may also be worn.

Hre men usually wear a turban; yellow is apparently the preferred color for the turbans. Like Hre clothing, the turban is derived from the headgear of the Cham.

Hre women, especially the younger ones, dress in very colorful clothing. In public, unmarried women wear a bodice or tight jacket which is usually blue and black, although some of the younger women wear white.[2] The jackets generally have two rows of red and white embroidery, 10 inches wide, on each side of a row of buttons down the front.

Skirts are black or dark blue and have two tiers; the outer tier extends to the middle of the calf, while the inner tier is ankle length. Both tiers have 5 to 7 rows of red and white embroidery, about 20 centimeters in width.

Jewelry is important to the Hre women, offering a convenient

means for the display of wealth. The rich Hre wear heavy collars, necklaces beaded with wood, amber, and silver, or pendant necklaces of silver coins. Earrings of silver or gold may also be worn. The poor wear one or two strings of colored wooden beads, a small string of silver beads, or a necklace of red and yellow copper.[3] Some young women also wear silver or copper bracelets on their wrists and ankles.[4] Hre men wear a necklace, usually of heavy, dark beads; amber necklaces are considered proper for sorcerers only.[5]

Folk Beliefs

Hre folk beliefs center around ghosts, demons, and other spirits of unusual and mystical form. Relating folklore is a favorite Hre recreation at the fireside on chilly nights.[6]

Poison is the subject of much folklore. The Hre believe demons and other evil spirits live in poison. Accordingly, these spirits must be satisfied: the stories claim that in the past, once a year, on a moonlit night, a human was killed and offered to the spirits. In addition to the human sacrifice, the spirits were offered fresh blood from a white cock. If this annual ritual was not held, the Hre believed that the spirits would turn on any member of the household who possessed poison. The greater the number of sacrificial deaths by poison, the more contented the spirit was believed to become.[7] The Hre are also said to believe that children living in a house which stores poison are jaundiced, bloated, stunted, and weaker than other children.[8]

A typical story about spirits concerns a spirit-animal called *cha rap* which walks erect, is as tall as a man, has hair like a monkey, and has feet that are turned backwards. This spirit-animal lives in the deepest part of the forest or on the highest mountains, is rarely seen, and eats only young bamboo shoots. All children are warned to be cautious and to travel in groups when in the forest, lest they meet the cha rap, for the spirit-animal hides when it hears the voices of several people and will not harm them. To meet a cha rap means death, as it moves swiftly and cuts off people's heads with its knifelike arms.

Although the cha rap cannot speak, it understands human speech. If a human being encounters a cha rap and shouts, "*dam dam, dam*" (stab, stab, stab), the cha rap will be caught off guard and will attempt to stab him. This gives the human being a chance to escape; however, if he thoughtlessly shouts "*chem, chem*" (cut off head), the spirit-animal will kill him immediately.[9]

Another spirit-animal, called the *diam dia*, resembles a tiger. When it sees a man, the diam dia sits down, removes the skin from its chest, and eats it. A man who witnesses this horrible sight and says nothing is safe. But if the man says, "Heavens! What a

terrible thing. It has taken off its skin and is eating it," the diam dia jumps up and immediately kills him.[10]

Some folktales explain Hre prohibitions against certain foods. According to one story, in ancient times a man caught an eel, took it home, and ate it. Disaster then struck his village, causing it to sink into the earth and disappear. Nowadays, whenever a Hre catches an eel he throws it back into the water to avoid similar punishment.[11]

Hre rationalization of modern technology is illustrated by their explanation of aircraft. When they first became acquainted with airplanes, the Hre believed that an airplane was a creature half man and half animal which ate no rice, but drank water (gasoline). The pilot was the father of the airplane and the only person the plane would obey. The airplane flew only when its father was on its back, it slept with the father on the ground, and crew members were the servants of the father.[12]

Eating and Drinking Customs

Hre eating habits are rather simple. They do not eat breakfast; their noon meal is at home, even if they are working in the ricefields; and supper is eaten at sunset. Food is usually served in baskets placed on the floor; wealthier families use copper trays, bowls, and chopsticks. The hand, however, is still the most common utensil.

Various eating proscriptions exist. A daughter-in-law and father-in-law may not eat from the same platter; the same prohibition applies to a son-in-law and his mother-in-law.[13]

Rice is the principal staple of the Hre diet. Only when the rice harvest is poor will they supplement their diet with yams, manioc, corn, or vegetables and bulbs from the forest. The Hre consider yams more nourishing than corn and prefer to search the forest for wild yams than to eat roasted or boiled domestic corn. The Hre also value a mixture of green jackfruit and rice above a mixture of rice and manioc.

Meat and fish are rare items in the daily diet; pork and chicken are eaten only on feast days and New Year's Day.

Crabs, snails, and crayfish are prepared by boiling, roasting, drying, and salting. When salted, fish are first washed, then placed unscaled in jars of brine, and covered with banana leaves. The jars are not tightly sealed, so the fish ferment with a strong, disagreeable odor. Frogs, another favorite Hre food, are prepared by cooking or salting. The whole frog, ungutted, is cooked in a pot with bamboo shoots. The frogs are placed in a jar, and salt is added; the frogs soon disintegrate into a viscious, rotten mass infested with maggots.[14]

The Hre do not cultivate vegetables. Rarely do the Hre eat green

vegetables, such as mustard greens, lettuce, *ren* or bindweed (member of the morning glory family). More favored are gourds, bamboo, pumpkins, and a few herbs gathered from the forest.

Water, the common beverage of the Hre, is usually obtained from springs which are kept clean and pure. Stored in jars, the water supply is replenished by the women who carry it from the water sources in peeled bamboo tubes or earthenware jugs. Tea is expensive and is offered to guests only by the rich.[15]

Most Hre are betel addicts. A guest is offered betel even before food or drink.

Rice wine or *ca ro* plays an important part in Hre life. All Hre drink—men and women, old and young. The wine jug is passed around at all events, including festivals, sacrifices, family reunions, and when guests are being entertained.[16]

Wine is usually made from rice of the first harvest; if rice is scarce, then wine may be made with corn, manioc, green beans, or roots gathered from the forest. Almost half the paddy harvest is set aside for making wine, even when the crop is barely sufficient for the family's current needs. The rice is fermented for only 4 or 5 days and is never distilled; thus it has a low alcohol content.[17] Since rice wine improves with age, the wealthy Hre sometimes bury jugs of wine for a year.

To help the wine ferment, a local root called *ko xi blo*, which belongs to the *thao* genus of ground vine, is added. The Hre use only the outer layer of this root, which is scraped off, dried, ground, and mixed with a kind of ginger and rice powder to form a cake about the size of an egg. Half of this cake, together with a quarter of a bushel of rice and water, is placed in each jug, which is then covered with a layer of banana leaves. Making the fermenting cakes is considered degrading and only the poorest tribesmen make them for sale.[18]

The wine jug is tied to a post, usually on the entrance platform to the house, and is placed so that several guests may sit around it.

The wine is drunk through straws or *trieng*, narrow bamboo reeds usually measuring from 4 to 5 feet in length. The straws, which are long, pale brown, slightly curved tubes resembling brass, are made by drying bamboo reed and removing the pith.[19] To facilitate sipping, three or four holes are cut into the lower end of the tube. Drinking through a straw has the advantage of concealing how much a person consumes, provided he keeps the end of the tube in his mouth and pretends to drink.

Wine drinking is accompanied by a ritual. First, the host takes a stalk of dry thatch from the roof and dips it in the wine jar, symbolizing the consecration of the drinking tube to the spirits and the ancestors. Then he drops a few banana leaves into the jug so that

the rice will not be disturbed or mixed with the wine. Next he adds enough fresh water to bring the wine level to the mouth of the jug. If the jar is not full, the guests are not considered to be honored. After lowering the required number of tubes into the wine until they reach bottom, the host formally invites his guest to drink with him. First he hands the drinking tube to the most honored guest. In so doing, he supports the tube with his left hand and keeps his right hand palm down. The guest takes the tube in his right hand, never the left, for the Hre believe the right hand to be more honorable than the left. Then the host sees that the correct end of the tube is in the jug. It is considered a discourtesy if the wrong end of a tube is handed to a Hre. To deliberately hand the wrong end to a guest is a provocation and a sign of contempt, which may lead to a fight.[20]

After everyone has been given a tube, the host and his wife place their index fingers on the mouth of the jar, saying seven times in turn, "May this wine bring you good health." The host and hostess then each take a sip through their tubes and through those of their guests. This wine they spit on the floor to show the guests that the wine has not been poisoned and that the straws are undamaged and unobstructed.[21] Then the guests also take a sip and also spit out their first mouthful of wine.

After this ritual, the drinking begins in earnest. Drinking is not continuous, and after every few rounds of drinking the tubes are put down while the participants rest and talk.

If the host sees a guest pretending to drink, he uses this ploy to oblige him to drink: he invites the guest to take his tube; at the same time the host pours a bowl of water into the jug. The guest must drink or the jar overflows. Then the other guests, one by one, invite the reluctant drinker to go through the same ritual. Thus the reluctant guest may be required to drink several bowls of rice wine. Custom also requires the host and other guests to join the nondrinker in the same formality.[22]

When the wine has been diluted by water, the tubes are moved to a spot in the jug where the water and wine have not yet mixed. Then another stage of drinking begins: the host sips a mouthful of wine from several straws at once, spits it into a bowl, and invites a particular guest to drink. Then the other guests invite that particular guest to drink also, and another round begins.

The host is pleased when his guests become intoxicated and display all the symptoms, including lying down on the floor. A drunken guest is considered a sincere friend who has highly honored the host. When a guest has reached the limit of his capacity and wishes to stop drinking, he may request the host's permission. The host may allow him to rest, but he will later urge that the drinking be continued.

Nearly everyone in the Hre territory possesses some poison, and its use is apparently common. Individuals poison their enemies and villages poison enemy villages. The preparation and use of poison is especially prevalent in the Ba To region. Usually poison is administered through the water supply, food, or drink. It is easy to poison wells, whereas it is impossible to poison springs.

Several types of poison are available, varying in degree of fatality and the availability of an antidote. The deadliest poison is powdered *do*, which is yellowish gray, has a nauseating odor, and is usually stored in a small bottle sealed with beeswax. The Bahnar Bonam prepare do from secret ingredients. Some Hre believe do is prepared from ground tiger whiskers and that a vindictive genie lives in the poison. A few grains of do, touching the lips, sprinkled in food, or put in a drinking tube, will kill a man. Death may occur in just 4 hours, or the victim can linger for as long as a week, suffering with stomach cramps, symptoms of cholera (vomiting, passing blood, and foaming at the mouth), finally turning blue and dying. Some Hre use this poison (do) to intimidate their neighbors.

In liquid form, do may be mixed with wine, food, and water; its effects are similar to those of the powder, except that it is slower acting, so that the victim may linger for as long as 10 days. Neither an antidote nor the composition of do—powder or liquid—is known.

A third kind of poison, *rin*, is used as theft insurance. Rin is a bulb which looks like saffron or ginger and is grown secretly by the Hre. Its leaves are picked and crumbled, then sprinkled on whatever is to be poisoned—including fruit trees—when the owners are absent. The poison will take hold when a person touches the object that has been covered with it. Various symptoms of this poison are eyes swollen shut and running with tears, a red and swollen face, swollen arms and legs, severe pains, yellow skin, or the loss of appetite. Furthermore, if the skin is scratched, a foul yellow fluid runs out; the urine becomes brown, and finally, blood is passed. The antidote for rin is a special leaf which when applied to the affected parts, effects a gradual cure.

Another poison, used on arrowheads for hunting and war, is fatal if it touches an open cut. When a poisoned arrowhead penetrates the body, it kills within 10 minutes. This poison is made by mixing over a flame a resin obtained from the *cam* tree (which resembles the persimmon tree) with red pepper, *rang ret* (centipede teeth), and *rang ran* (serpent teeth). The concoction is cooked until it becomes a shiny black ointment. To test the poison while it is cooking, a drop of poison is placed about an inch away from a fresh cut on a tribesman's hand; if the blood stops flowing,

the poison is strong enough to kill man or beast. The arrowheads are dipped into the liquid poison, which is then allowed to dry. No antidote exists for this poison and it is always fatal. However, the flesh of animals killed by this poison is safe to eat.[23]

The Hre believe ivory chopsticks can detect poisoned food. If the chopsticks are placed in poisoned foods, the food will start to bubble like boiling water. Hence, a host may offer ivory chopsticks to a guest as a sign of sincerity.[24]

Customs Relating to Animals

The Hre regard the buffalo as the noblest of animals, hence the most important animal for sacrifices. The Hre consider the python the trickiest creature; the tiger, the most cunning; and the elephant, the most courageous. Ants are believed to be the remains of bodies which have rotted in the jungle and have not been given a ceremonial burial. The Hre have no taboos against the eating of animals—domestic or wild.[25]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Hre have had considerable contact with two lowland peoples —the Vietnamese and the Cham—for a much longer period than other Montagnard groups in the Republic of Vietnam. The Cham have always been highly regarded by the Hre, and a long history of friendly contacts exists between the two groups.

The Hre are not known to attack strangers without provocation. Their revolt against the Viet Minh in 1949, however, is evidence of their willingness to fight aggressively against those who threaten their homes and families.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The spiritual life of the Hre is very complicated despite an outward appearance of simplicity. The Hre believe that spirits, both good and evil, dwell in the objects of the physical world as well as in persons living and dead. The problems of daily life are often associated with these spirits, which must be appeased through offerings. Hre beliefs are expressed both in formal ceremonies and in the routine acts of daily life.

Certain trees, animals, and other natural objects are held in reverence, because the Hre believe the spirits in them can affect the lives of the tribesmen. The Hre worship these spirits in order to remain on good terms with them, thus making daily life easier.

The Hre also may appeal to these spirits to fulfill a wish or need. However, it is not known which of the spirits are good and which are bad, so it is considered dangerous to deal with them, and necessary to have an intermediary called the ba giau or sorcerer. The ba giau is a person who knows the necessary rituals and the times for festival and sacrifice days; he regulates festival dates and presides over and manages all ceremonies.

The ba giau is the principal in rituals marking the stages of an individual's life.[1] He is able to foretell life, death, and future events, to calm the spirits, to cure sickness, to interpret strange happenings (birds flying into a house, bees trying to build a hive in a house, a frog jumping on a roof, a rat gnawing on clothing, lightning striking a house or a tree in a yard, the meeting of a villager and a tiger, or a man bumping into another villager who is carrying a piece of charred firewood), which are considered evil omens, or *bo rinh*, and requires sacrifices.[2]

Usually in every locality there are one or two ba giau, who are treated with varying degrees of respect.

Principal Spirits

The Hre have several categories of spirits. The heavenly spirits are called *vya*; the earth spirits, *trau*; the spirits of ancestors, *bien*. Other important spirits are water spirits (*vya diak*), mountain spirits (*vya vang*), fire spirits (*vya un*), hearth spirits (*vya vna*), and evil spirits or demons called *kiet choc*.[3] The evil spirits are

held responsible for drought and the death of people or cattle through sickness.[4]

Religious Ceremonies

When a sacrifice is believed necessary, the offended spirit must first be identified to determine the correct ceremonial sacrifice. The ba giau divines this by cutting off the feet of a young chicken and placing them in boiling water. He then "reads" the result by interpreting the contraction of the claws in order to determine the animal to be offered. Then the animal designated by the ba giau must be sacrificed—whether it be a chicken, pig, goat, or buffalo.

A principal sacrifice, one in which the entire community usually participates, is the buffalo festival or *ta reo po.*[5] The most noble of beasts, the buffalo, is thus the best possible sacrifice, for he may represent any spirit. The buffalo festival is held only for following special reasons:[6]

Recovery from a serious illness;
Narrow escape from death or accident;
The release of a Hre who had been arrested or captured;
A victory celebration;
Safe return from a hunting expedition;
Any agreement of friendship;
An annual village meeting at the village chief's house
for an offering for the welfare of the entire community;
An offering every few years by a rich family to ask for
the continued welfare of the family.

The importance of the buffalo sacrifice is demonstrated by the complex ceremony used in erecting the buffalo post. The ba giau selects the location, usually a spot in the forest or at the entrance to a village, and breaks the ground. The village elders then each turn over a symbolic spadeful of earth. The young men finish digging the hole—they are never allowed to take the initiative in setting up the post. Only an odd number of people—five, seven, or nine—may aid the ba giau in this task.

When a sacrifice is offered for petition or general thanksgiving (ta reo po or *cham gieng*), the buffalo post is a tall central column bracketed by two shorter columns. During a thanksgiving ceremony for recovery from a serious illness or during the rite of a blood pledge, the central post is surrounded by four smaller posts. The main shaft is constructed from bamboo and to it is affixed a wooden cross arm with painted red and black designs. The posts may be beautifully carved,[7] but the carving is done by lowland Vie namese, not by the Hre themselves.[8]

The buffalo ceremony is always preceded by the sacrifice of other animals. At least one pig, or perhaps two or three pigs, are sacri-

ficed at a crossroad. If these are not enough, then chickens and geese are also killed. These preliminary sacrifices are eaten before the Hre begin the buffalo sacrifice. Any uneaten portion of the sacrificed animals is left on the crossroad, to prevent demons from following the celebrants home.[9]

When preparations in the village are complete, the buffalo sacrifice begins. A buffalo is tied to the post, and the men and women of the village march around it to the music of gongs and drums.[10] The ba giau invokes the spirits and recounts his divination with the chicken's feet. When he is certain the spirits are witnessing the ceremony, he stabs the buffalo in the throat to draw blood. The elders then take turns making ceremonial stabs, until the young men finally administer the coup de grace. The sacred sacrificial knife, used only for this ceremony, is then returned to a sacred post in the house. Blood from the buffalo is daubed on the buffalo post and on bamboo chopsticks placed on a table in a symbolic invitation to the spirits to join the feast. Some blood is mixed with rice wine and poured over the sacred gongs. The foreleg, a hind leg, an eye, an ear, the tongue, horns, tail, and a bit of the buffalo's flesh are then cut from the buffalo and placed on a ceremonial table. When the carcass is cleaned, the entrails and a little more flesh are added to this offering; the rite is then considered complete. The remainder of the meat is roasted and all the Hre celebrate by eating the buffalo meat, drinking rice wine, singing, and dancing.

The sacrifices for thanksgiving for a recovery from illness [11] never end in a feast.

Other sacrifices are made at sowing and harvesting time. In every ricefield there is a sacred plot 3 meters square, generally located at the point where water flows into the field. Anyone allowing livestock to graze on the sacred plot is liable to punishment.[12] Here, before planting, a pig is sacrificed with some grains of rice from the previous harvest of the sacred plot. The seeds are then sown; only after these seeds have sprouted is ordinary rice sown. Prior to the harvesting, another sacrifice is offered on the sacred plot, then sacred rice is harvested—after which the ordinary rice is harvested. Following the harvest, a sacrifice is made in thanksgiving.

When incest is committed, a sacrifice is offered to placate the spirits. The Hre believe an incestuous union will bring misfortune not only upon the persons concerned, but upon the entire village. Rice wine and a white chicken or a goat are brought to the banks of a stream, where the ba giau offers them to the spirits. The male offender must stab the animal with a sharp stick, allowing its blood to flow into the stream and onto the ground. Then the

village elders take the same stick and stab the animal while they ask the spirits to forgive the village, grant it peace, welfare, favorable rains and winds, and a bountiful harvest.[14]

Every season, sacrifices are also offered to the water spirit (vya diak) at natural springs.[15]

At sacrifices the Hre burn betel or *ghinh gu* in beeswax candles: one candle is burned when a chicken is sacrificed, two candles for a pig, and seven to ten candles for the offering of a buffalo. At the buffalo post is a ceremonial table of woven bamboo about 120 inches square. The type of ceremony determines the number of tables. Besides the candles and sacrificial objects, a jar symbolic of the wind is also placed on the table.[15]

A variety of sacred objects are used for Hre ceremonies and rituals. The principal object is the sacred hearth or *mnu uan t'teo*, the dwelling place of the fire god and the hearth god. Every house has a special room which, in addition to the sacred hearth, contains other sacred and venerated objects. Only the master and mistress, with their small children, may sleep in the special room. The sacred hearth is used only for cooking food for sacrifices. The sacred hearthstone or *mo pan renh* rests on the hearth. Only the master of the home may touch the mo pan renh and then only for religious reasons. If touched by anyone other than the master, accidentally or deliberately, the sacrifice of a pig must be made lest the gods become angry and bring disease to the family.[16]

The hearth room also contains the sacred mortar. It is stationary, carved from a tree trunk, and used for grinding rice. In a corner behind the sacred hearth are the sacred pots used to cook food for festivals and to make cakes for the New Year sacrifice. These may not be used for any other purpose. To the right, in front of the hearth, is the sacred sacrificial post or *de reng-kia*. Midway up the post is a bamboo tray about 40 inches square, on which the sacrifices are placed for ordinary feasts. When a sacrifice is offered, a small reed with one end shredded is attached to the sacred post. In a corner near the sacred post are placed the sacred personal properties of the head of the house and his wife. When the household head or his wife dies, these things are buried with them for the use of their spirits.[17]

Every house also contains a sacred sack of salt which hangs over the hearth. In the house of the rich this sack may weigh 12 or 13 pounds; in the house of the poor it is about one-third this size. This salt is used only for festivals and is never mixed with ordinary salt. If the supply of everyday salt is exhausted, the family may buy, trade, or borrow more, but it will never use the sacred salt.

Missionary Contact

Although the Catholic Church has been in the Hre area for a long time, it has not been very successful in making conversions. In 1958 a mission station was established by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It, too, has had little success. Conditions of insecurity resulted in the closing of the mission and the loss of contact with the Hre during the early 1960's.[18]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Hre economy is based on agriculture, which supplies the bulk of their food supply. The Hre diet is supplemented by food gathering, hunting, fishing, and raising domestic animals. There is little handicraft work among the Hre. Although the village is the basic economic unit, cultivation by family units for profit and trade is common, especially in the lowland areas.

Predominant Occupations

The cultivation of rice, the primary occupation of the Hre, varies in method according to terrain: wet rice is cultivated in the lowland valleys and slash-and-burn dry-rice cultivation is prevalent in the higher regions.

The lowland Hre cultivate wet rice on permanent fields with the aid of primitive irrigation: natural gravity, basket scoops, and tripod scoops. The time for planting wet rice varies. Many Hre plant two rice crops annually: the more important seasonal *(mua)* crop is planted from August to September; the second and less important crop *(chiem)* is planted in March or April. Frequent typhoons in October and November preclude rice harvesting during this season and all crops must be planted to mature by late summer.[1]

The lowland Hre cultivate many varieties of wet rice; they show a keen appreciation for the particular qualities of rice suitable for particular soil, water, and climatic conditions. The various types of rice apparently supplement each other, and the variety tends to eliminate complete crop failure. The lowland Hre farm with plow and harrow, usually drawn by oxen or buffaloes; buffalo dung is used for fertilizer, a technique acquired from the Cham.[2]

When the proper wet-rice seedbed has been thoroughly prepared by plowing and harrowing, the Hre plant the seed. One or two months later the seedlings are transplanted to another plowed and prepared field.

From 3 to 6 months after it is transplanted, the rice is harvested. The grain is cut with a hand sickle and carried to the houses for threshing, usually by buffaloes treading over it. Some Hre thresh rice by storing it until the grains loosen and fall off the stems, so

that by the time the rice is ready to cook, it is black. The rice is husked with a heavy wooden pestle in a mortar made from a tree trunk.[3]

The two major types of rice crop vary in importance in Hre culture. The mua, or seasonal crop, reserved for making sacrifices, rice wine, and rice cakes, is stored separately from the chiem, or second rice. These two kinds of rice are never mixed or cooked together. Chiem rice may be cooked and served as soon as it is harvested, whereas mua rice may not be cooked until every member of the family is present. Only one crop of each kind of rice is ever planted during one farming season. If, after transplanting, the seedlings are killed by drought or insects, the Hre will not plant another crop; they will wait until the next planting season.[4]

The highland Hre in the mountainous regions use the slash-and-burn method of rice cultivation. Under this type of cultivation, land is farmed until its native fertility declines after 3 or 4 successive years. Then it is abandoned to allow it to regain its vegetation and nutrients. The farmers move to other fields and later back to the abandoned land.

Briefly, the slash-and-burn technique involves cutting down, during the winter months, all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer which permits crops for 3 to 4 years. When the fields no longer support a crop, the villagers move to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle, and repeat the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area.

Both the lowland and highland Hre cultivate a variety of secondary crops: gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, tomatoes, red peppers, cabbages, corn, beans, manioc, and cotton.[5] The highland Hre eat more manioc and corn than do the lowland tribesmen.

The Hre, particularly in the Ba To and other lowland areas, supplement their subsistence with cash crops of tobacco, ramie, hemp, and broomstraw. Large areca (coconut palm) plantations are located in the Ba Doc and Gia Vuc lowlands. At least one group of Hre depends not on rice but on cinnamon for its principal revenue.[6]

The Hre sell coconut while still green; the Vietnamese method of cutting the dried fruit is unknown to them.

Large quantities of tea are also grown to sell to the Vietnamese. Various tropical fruit trees are common.[7]

When not involved in cultivation, the Hre gather forest products and plants for food or for trade. The men gather mushrooms and honey, while the women gather bulbs, vegetables, bamboo shoots, and certain leaves. The forests have little of commercial value, except for the cinnamon trees of Tra Bong. Little wood in the Hre

area is suitable for construction—the wood serves principally as firewood for the Hre.[8]

The Ba To area is especially noted for the purity of its clear, pale white honey, which is sold unadulterated and unprocessed and is prized for its natural sweetness. Cham tradesmen often buy the honey for as little as 30 to 50 piasters a jar and then sell it for 50 to 70 piasters a jar.[9]

The men hunt to provide both food and items for trade. Hartshorn (deer's antler) and tiger bone are sold to the Vietnamese who value them as aphrodisiacs. Women fish and catch crabs and snails to supplement the food supply. Pigs, buffaloes, and some goats are raised primarily for blood sacrifices, although occasionally these animals are slaughtered for food. Buffaloes, although for the most part destined for sacrifice, are also used for plowing. During epidemics, many buffaloes die, as the Hre are unfamiliar with the use of vaccine.[10]

Special Arts and Skills

The Hre have no industry and are not particularly skilled in craftwork. They are said to have no talent for carving.[11] In every village there is basketmaking. Using bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood, the Hre make receptacles, matting, light walls, traps, weapons, pipes, and containers for water, salt, and tobacco.

A special artisan group makes coffins by hollowing out tree trunks. With a light loom, the women weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton and ramie. Locally grown cotton and ramie fiber provide most of the thread, although current trade is supplying more and more fiber from outside areas.

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have long been aware of a monetary system, the Hre depend on a barter system of trade. Bartering is a conscious preference: the Hre prefer to exchange goods, for to them bartering is more convenient and direct. Buying and selling are apparently too abstract for the Hre. Only when dealing with the Cham do they use currency—and then they do so reluctantly. Gold, silver, and gems are used exclusively for jewelry, never as currency. When the Hre must handle money, they use paper money, preferring new bills to old in the belief that the old bills will not last long. The Hre tend to spend newly acquired money quickly, and as they cannot distinguish between the denominations of paper currency, they often pay more than the actual value of their purchases.[12]

Among the Hre, prices are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, copper pots, jars, gongs, and other objects.[13] From the Cham the Hre acquire copper pots which become family heirlooms. Together with items such as gongs and jars, these copper pots are transmitted

from parent to child, with subsequent generations accumulating this wealth. Only dire circumstances will compel a Hre to dispose of his family treasures. Antique jars *(xon ren)* may be valued as worth at least 20 buffaloes. Few of these ancient Chinese jars exist.[14] The most valuable jars are seldom kept in the house; to preserve them from possible fire or breakage they are buried. Although villagers know where the precious jars are buried, their great veneration protects the jars from theft.

Buffaloes are also valuable, but are regarded as a special type of property because they are destined primarily for sacrifice.[15]

Apparently, for the most part, the Hre trade by preference with the lowland Cham.[16] They say the Cham are "good" to them, helping them during famine, illness, or misfortune and providing food and a night's lodging when they come down to market. For these kindnesses the Hre sell their goods at low prices to the Cham. Athough they profit less from trade with the Cham, the Hre feel more confident about the trade.[17]

Vietnamese traders live in several of the largest Hre settlements, and itinerant Vietnamese traders occasionally enter Hre territory. The Hre also go into Vietnamese towns for trading. The Hre are said to have little sophistication in trading—a trait that has enriched many a tradesman.

The Hre purchase cotton cloth, silks, agricultural implements, iron for their weapons, gongs, pottery, jars, dried fish, dogs, pigs, and other domestic animals, and salt. In return they sell coconuts, paddy, hemp, broomstraw, tea, betel, tobacco, rattan, beeswax and honey, cinnamon bark, hartshorn, ivory, and various forest products.[18]

For the Hre, trading is an entertainment involving long deliberation. Each family usually conducts its own exchange. For large transactions or the sale of items not normally traded, the villagers ask for the opinion of the *ca ra*, generally the richest, most influential man in the village. The ca ra is expected to know the value of goods and to be helpful in buying and selling, often acting as a middleman between a Hre village and the outside world. The Hre honor and trust connections made by the ca ra.[19]

The Hre never make a contract of sale—even for a ricefield. When the parties have agreed on a price, they invite the village elders and villagers to drink wine and to witness the agreement. A settlement is made then and there.

Wealth Distribution

Although few Hre are wealthy, economic classes do exist. Evidence of wealth includes size of annual rice crop, number of ricefields, number of buffaloes owned, and number of copper pots, gongs, and jars.

A very rich man with a household of 50 has been described as owning over 200 *mau ta* (3,600 square meters, or a little more than an acre), 300 to 400 antique pots, 30 to 40 sets of gongs, and a few hundred ordinary jars. A poor man may only own 1 to 2 *sao* (one-tenth of a mau ta) and one buffalo.[21]

Other criteria for judging wealth include the length of a house (more than 90 feet would indicate a very rich family), the number of fireplaces (several denote a rich house), and the kind of necklaces worn by the women (silver collars, necklaces, or chains, at least 20 inches in length), denote wealth.[22]

On New Year's Day, possessions are displayed. Then one can easily tell who is rich and who is poor.

Land tenancy is relatively uncommon among the Hre. Eighty percent of the Hre in the Ba To lowlands own their own fields.[23]

Servants and agricultural help are difficult to hire and only the wealthiest can afford them. The Hre do not like to work for hire nor do they usually find it necessary to work for wages: ordinarily, when help is needed, neighbors arrange for reciprocal aid. However, during the season for rice cultivation, this cooperation is often insufficient, and additional labor must be obtained by tribesmen owning large pieces of land. Wealthy families may also occasionally hire guards to protect their possessions.[24]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The Hre have never achieved political unity on a tribal level. Allegiance is normally given only to villages, each independent and led by a chief and a council of elders.[1] In periods of emergency, neighboring Hre villages may band together for political purposes under one chief. The lowland Hre reportedly united under the leadership of two chiefs named Dinh-Loye and Dinh-Diu during their 1949 rebellion against the Viet Minh.[2]

The village is the basic political unit among the Hre. The village political system consists of a village chief or ca ra and a council of elders. The council of elders functions as an advisory body to the ca ra and serves, with the ca ra, as a tribunal for resolving village disputes.

The ca ra is generally the richest, most influential man in the village. He is believed to have derived his skills in war, hunting, and discussion, and his knowledge of tribal customs, from the spirits.

A ba giau or sorcerer may often become a Hre village chief. Powerful in the religious sphere, reputedly able to foretell life, death, future events, and to cure sickness, a sorcerer can acquire the despotic power of a feudal potentate: pronouncement from his lips could be the death sentence for a man or for a village.[3]

Under the French colonial administration, a French-appointed functionary selected from the village acted as the liaison between the French and the tribesmen, in addition to the chief chosen by the villagers. He was responsible for the initiation of French tribal programs, tax collection, and the communication of French decrees to the villagers.

Following the departure of the French, the Diem regime attempted to politically and socially integrate the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam.[4] Officially, the Central Government handles relations between tribal villages; Government representatives deal with groups of seven or eight villages, while the villages themselves are represented by their village chiefs.

Legal System

The traditional legal system of the Hre has never been recorded.

Their oral tradition is interpreted by the council of elders, while justice is rendered by the ca ra and the council. There is no appeal from decision: only by leaving Hre territory can a verdict be nullified.

Hre customary law is predicated upon the idea that every man is free. If a man violates tradition, however, he must answer for it. If the offender is absent or if he has run away, his next of kin —wife, children, or relatives—are held responsible. Punishment for certain crimes may even involve lifelong slavery for the person against whom the crime was committed.[5]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[6]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal laws and customs.[7] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. 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 steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically 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 new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and provincial levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[8]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief, aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[9] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to

appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[10]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[11]

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.[12]

Subversive Influences

Factors contributing to the vulnerability of the Hre to subversion are geographic location, historical isolation, and traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese. The Hre territory was known to be heavily infiltrated by the Viet Cong in 1965. The lowland tribespeople were generally described as anti-Viet Cong. The highlanders were regarded as neutral.[13]

The principal objective of Viet Cong subversive activity among the Hre is to win the allegiance of the tribesmen and develop them into a hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Still other important Viet Cong objectives are the maintenance of their supply lines through the Hre area, the prevention of movement of Central Government forces in the area, and the destruction of any Government strongholds in the region.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village, attempting to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. The Viet Cong usually have a thorough knowledge of tribal customs; they will adopt the Hre dress to identify themselves with the tribe.

When suspicions of the villagers are allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong begin an intensive propaganda campaign against the Central Government with the ultimate purpose of recruiting and training the tribesmen for various support or combat missions.

Should propaganda and cajolery fail, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror to coerce the Hre into refusing to cooperate with the Central Government.[14]

During the Indochina War, the Viet Minh spread stories that the French were liars. fools, and cowards, that the foreigners wished to enslave the Hre, to steal their wives and daughters, and that the French ravaged all lands, destroyed all crops, and paid lower

prices to tribal people than to the Vietnamese in the lowlands.[18] It is probable that the Viet Cong have adopted similar themes in their psychological warfare operations against the Vietnamese Government.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Hre area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning the number of radios in the area or Hre familiarity with them. Radios have probably been brought in by military personnel, but the extent to which they are accessible to the tribesmen is unknown at this time. Any radios in operation in this area could pick up broadcasts from provincial radio stations.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Hre language might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

The Hre tribe does not have a written form of their language; the only written materials that might be effective would be in the Vietnamese language, which a few Hre tribesmen can read. Tribesmen reading Vietnamese material could be expected to communicate the information to the remainder of the tribesmen. Data about the use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Hre should be oriented around the principle of improving the condition of the villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against harassment from the Viet Cong are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the specific Hre village. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the village ca ra in order to show respect for Hre political structure. The Hre tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Hre villages would probably respond 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 emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained: the Hre 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 some Hre villages into new and larger villages, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.

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

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion 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.

Civi Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the

Hre 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. Introduction of insect and rodent control.
   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 broadcasting 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 literary training.
   b. Provide rudimentary vocational training.
   c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
   d. Provide basic citizenship education.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Hre can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. Like the Sedang, the Hre are rated among the best and most tenacious Montagnard fighters.[1] The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Hre can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat force.

When psychological pressures to win Hre support fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Hre yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong; without Government training and support, they do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong. Hre villages with adequate training and support will defend themselves and will occasionally initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

Organization for Defense

Lowland Hre villages are not organized for defense against surprise attack. In the highland areas, however, houses and villages are purposely built in easily defensible locations. In the past, highland Hre villages were surrounded by stockades, but these fortifications were gradually replaced with fences. More secure perimeter defenses may again be employed due to current military action in the Hre area.

Types of Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The traditional Hre weapons are spears, swords, buffalo hide shields, and crossbows with poisoned arrows. The Hre have long used traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks or foot traps. Some Hre had military training with the French and the Viet Minh and know how to use modern weapons. Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Hre can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning automatic rifle, although they

can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled and quickly reassembled.

The Hre pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Hre can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Hre have more difficulty handling sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, than hand weapons. They find it difficult to absorb the more abstract and technical aspects—such as timing trajectories—of such weapons.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Hre can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Hre learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

Those Hre who have served with the French are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HRE

Every action of the Hre tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Hre 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 Hre are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Hre village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village ca ra who will then introduce him to other principal village figures. In some Hre villages the ca ra rules as a despot and should be treated as such by outsiders.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Hre. 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 Hre 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. The ca ra should receive some credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of persons respected by the tribespeople.

Social Relationships

1. The Hre 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. The Hre like to shake hands with new acquaintances.[1] Visitors are more readily accepted if they shake hands with everyone when they first enter a Hre village.
4. When leaving a Hre, the customary farewell is *khae le a-lem* (Goodbye, I am going).[2]
5. When addressing an older Hre tribesman, it is a sign of respect to call him *dooc* (old).[3]
6. Outsiders should not get involved with Hre women.
7. When entering an empty Hre house, if one sees two cords hanging over the sacred fireplace, plus a mortar, this means that the family is temporarily away. If the mortar has been broken, the family has moved away permanently.[4]
8. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
9. Certain rites are prescribed for wine drinking with the Hre. An outsider unfamiliar with these rites should watch and imitate other guests to avoid conduct that might offend the host.
10. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Hre 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.
11. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Hre ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
12. An outsider should never enter a Hre house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
13. In a Hre house, the room next to the front porch is sacred; no stranger may enter unless specifically invited.[5]
14. The side doors of a Hre house are used only by members of the family—never by outsiders.[6]
15. When entering a house, shoes should be removed and left in a corner near the entrance. A mat is used to sit on. Guests staying overnight usually sleep on the ben chin veranda.[7]
16. Green branches fastened on all doors of a Hre house signify that a woman is in confinement and that visitors, not allowed inside the house, must sit on the veranda. Only the immedi-

ate family is permitted in the house, and they must use only the side doors.[8]

17. The Hre consider the right hand to be more honorable than the left. Never hand anything to a tribesman with the left hand, as this is considered to be impolite.[9]
18. When helping the Hre learn new techniques, methods, and concepts, 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 Hre believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
3. Do not mock Hre religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Hre life.
4. The Hre attach special religious importance to their main hearth room. Outsiders should not touch anything in this room in order to avoid violating traditional taboos.[10]

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Hre 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. Learn simple phrases in the Hre language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the Hre tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Hre are becoming aware of the benefits of medicine and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Hre 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.

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22. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
24. *Ibid.*

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Haquet, *op. cit.*, p. 1419; Riesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–63.
2. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 154–63.
4. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
6. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
7. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
8. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
14. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
15. Riesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–29.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES.

1. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HRE.

1. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

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