The word M'tao is almost always used in association with K'sok. It serves to designate demons and evil spirits of lower rank. The M'tao can enter the bodies of human beings to destroy them. From within the victim, they can, with the aid of a magic bellows, blow a cloud of powder that condenses into an internal ailment. They also shoot magic darts that will quickly kill their victims.[5]

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

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

Tlang hia is the third soul, and it is represented by a bird which leaves the body at death and becomes dew. This dew is used in the infant-naming ceremony to obtain the consent of the deceased maternal aunts and uncles to use one of their names.[6]

Relationships between the Rhade and the spirits can be adjusted to a degree by rituals and ceremonial sacrifices to the spirits. These relationships are handled by special religious practitioners called Mjao. They can be either male or female, although in practice few Mjao are female. Among their duties, the Mjao protect the tribesmen from attacks by the spirit of the tree trunk, the spirit of the mole-hill, the spirit of the forest, and the spirit of the spring, all of which are evil forces.[7]

Customs and Taboos

The folk beliefs of the Rhade are intimately related to their animistic religion. Evil spirits can cause anything from petty annoyances to major disasters, and they must be constantly appeased by sacrifices.

A technique of divination, called Epa Gie, or "measuring the stick with the arm," is designed to ascertain the desires of the good daily life. This consists of interrogating a spirit and of the intermediary, who then measures his arm on a bamboo stick previously cut to that length. Under the influence of the spirit of the stick, the intermediary goes into a trance and is unable to stretch out his arm. The differences of degree of arm movement are observed and interpreted as responses of the spirit of the bamboo stick.[8]

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
The Rhade want to die in their own villages because their local spirits cannot protect them outside the immediate area.	If the Rhade are in a hospital and believe they are dying, they will insist on being taken home. If a Rhade dies in a hospital, the tribesman responsible for his being there will be in trouble with the deceased person's family.[9]
If a turtle facing eastward is seen in the rice fields, a speedy death is presaged.	The Rhade bury their dead with the head toward the east, and the turtle shell resembles the mounded shape of Rhade graves.[10]
The movement of birds and small animals in the brush, the howl of the roe-deer, and the song of the m'lang birds are ill omens.[11]	
If a deer barks three times in a newly prepared rice field, death will strike the family.[12]	

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
If a crow lands on a long house during its construction, the structure must be abandoned or the family will suffer bad luck.[13]	
When a Rhade walks through the forest, a call from a certain bird on his left heralds bad luck, whereas a call from the right forecasts good fortune.[14]	
The appearance of a tiger, a snake, or a monkey are bad omens.[15]	Their appearance is sufficient reason to stop work and make special sacrifices.
It is forbidden to kill any kind of snake in the tribal fields.[16]	
The sight of a lizard is an unfavorable omen.	A lizard is a prediction of death.[17]
An early morning sneeze before going to work insures good luck for the rest of the day. However, a sneeze during a trip or upon starting a trip or departing from a person's home, requires a short delay to prevent misfortune.[18]	The Rhade believe sneezing irritates the spirits, and after a sneeze by a person or animal, one must remain still until the spirits recover from their anger.
A person who leaves a village taking his mats, jars, dishes, chickens, and pigs without offering rice or corn to each house arouses the anger of the dead and of the spirits.[19]	If a person in the village should become sick, the departed person is brought back and required to pay for all the sacrificed animals. If the sick person dies, the departed person must pay the blood price because he is considered responsible for the death.[20]

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
Some significant omens in dreams:[21]	Dreams assume a great importance in the lives of the Rhade.
Dreaming of water --	-- means fire will destroy the house or possibly even the village.
Dreaming of large fish or jars --	-- evokes a sense of death.
Dreaming that one's teeth are broken --	-- means there will be deaths in the family. The upper teeth represent the mother; the bottom, the father; and those on the sides, brothers, sisters and cousins.
Dreaming about an accident --	-- is a warning to remain at home and avoid an inevitable mishap.
Dreaming about a red blanket --	-- forecasts trouble.
Dreaming about fishing --	-- indicates that if the tribesman then goes fishing and catches a white fish, he will have good fortune.
Dreaming of harvesting eggplant --	-- means that people will be severely critical of the dreamer.
A pregnant woman dreaming about	
a knife or a cross-bow --	-- will give birth to a boy
a basket --	-- will give birth to a girl
An elephant is a kind of talisman to the Rhade.	Elephants have supposedly mystical ties with the clan. These ties are so strong that they are considered part of the family and given names.[22]

FOOTNOTES

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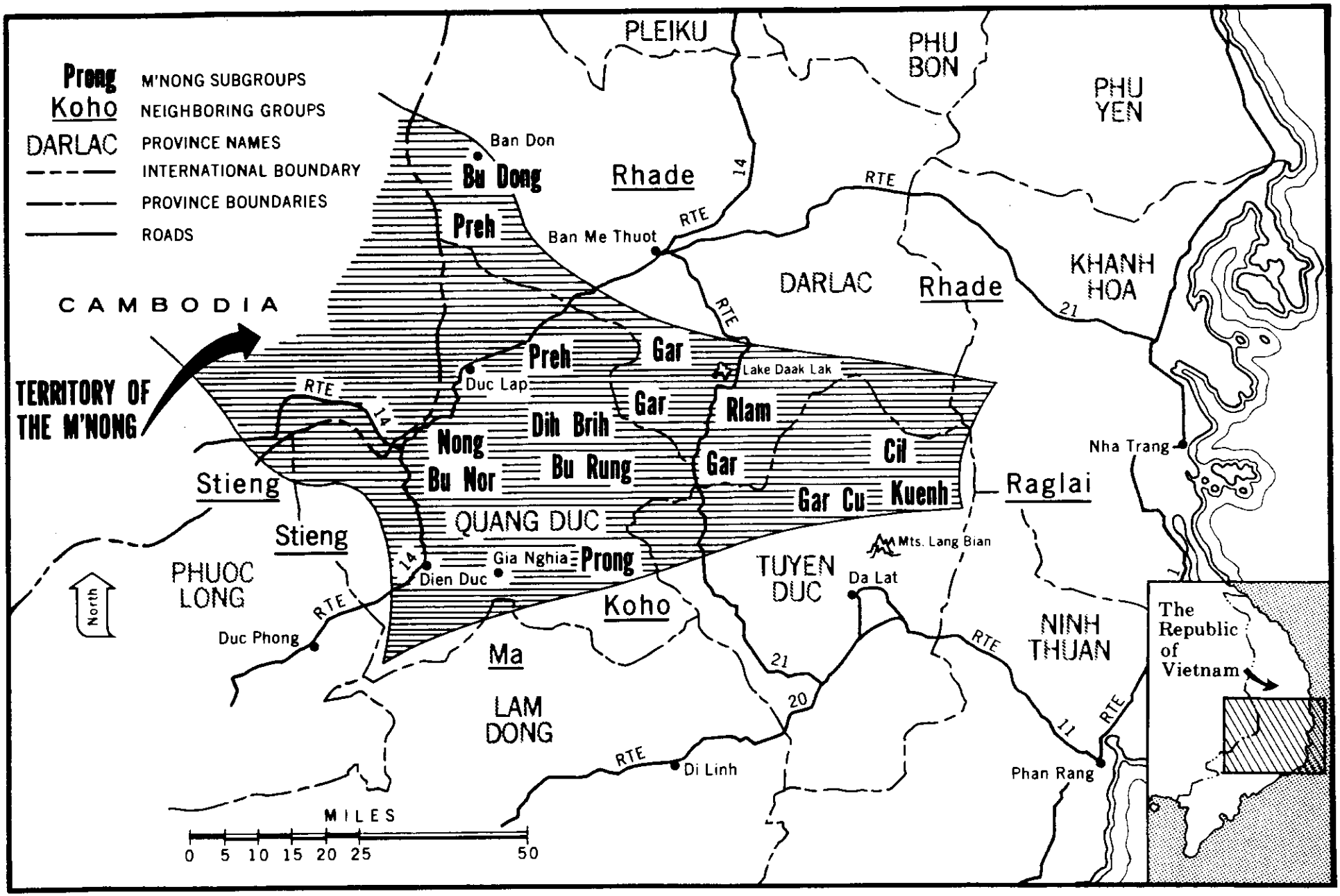

THE M'NONG SUBGROUPS

Psychological Characteristics

The M'nong are group oriented and seldom approach tasks and problems as individuals. Their behavior is strongly influenced by the conformity required by their traditions and customs.

The behavior of the M'nong is often unpredictable: at times they are overactive, excitable, and aggressive; at other times, they are calm and almost indolent.[1] In situations of great stress, the M'nong will quickly disappear into the forest. For instance, an attempt by the Central Government to relocate a M'nong group failed because being away from their lands and spirits so distressed the M'nong that at the first opportunity, they all moved out of the new village, disappearing into the forest to prearranged traditional hiding places.[2]

Religious Beliefs

The M'nong have an animistic religion; they believe that spirits inhabit all parts of their world. In addition, spirits are associated with mythical birds and mythical heroes. The M'nong live in constant interaction with those spirits; life is a constant struggle to thwart the evil spirits.[3] The M'nong believe that their ancestors have an existence after death, and they, too, watch over human beings and help them in their relationships with the spirits.[4]

The most important spirit in the M'nong religion is Nduu, who represents the soul of the rice (fertility) and is also the mythical or legendary hero who started the human race.[5] This spirit is called Tum Nduu by the Gar and Prah ba by other M'nong groups.[6]

Next in importance are the spirits of the elements: earth, fire, water, and sky. The spirit of the earth or land, Nglar Nguec, plays an important role in the selection of sites for fields and houses. The name Nglar Nguec means, literally, "Bird of the Rock Crystal."[7] There are several sky spirits of the rain, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and there are also subsidiary land spirits -- for example, spirits of topographical features and streams. Moreover, there are spirits connected with the village and its houses -- for example, spirits of the village gate, of the columns of the house, and of the hearth.[8]

In addition to the various spirits, the M'nong also have demons believed to be responsible for illness. These demons, called caak, are believed to steal the souls of the tribesmen, thereby causing illness.[9]

Prominent among the religious ceremonies performed by the M'nong are the rituals for the purification of a field when incest is suspected, for healing the sick, for preserving or improving the crops, for the burial of the dead, and for cementing alliances between parents and children or between tribal groups.[10]

Customs and Taboos

Believing that trees, rocks, and animals -- in fact, all their surroundings -- are inhabited by spirits, the M'nong are always on guard against evil spirits; they avoid committing offenses which might anger them. The M'nong believe that spirits make their wishes known through dreams and omens.

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
During the selection of a house site, it is considered a good omen if the owner of the new house dreams about fruit, rice, a paddy, a tomb, hunting, or swimming.	If the dream is about buffaloes, killing deer, or the breaking of teeth, it is considered a bad omen.[11]

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
Seeing flames devour the loincloth of a person in a dream predicts that person's death.[12]	
A violation of the taboo of sexual relations between members of the same family through the maternal line can precipitate disaster.[13]	For instance, the crops may fail or torrential rains may fall.
If rice is scraped from a pot with a knife, tigers are sure to come and attack one.[14]	
After the filing down of one's teeth, the person is prohibited from eating chicken or the vegetable khoi for eight days.[15]	In the past, at puberty the upper front teeth of boys and girls were filed down and stained black, while the lower front teeth were filed to sharp points.
To the M'nong, the tiger has supernatural significance and is associated with the spirits.	They do not like to hunt tigers, which some believe can become invisible.[16]
If a dog steps over a newly born infant, the dog must be sacrificed at once, then cooked and eaten by the people who attended the delivery of the child.[17]	
A swallow caught outside the house may be eaten; if a swallow is caught inside a house, eating it is taboo.[18]	The tribesmen examine the bird for evil signs; and if any evil signs are found, the house is purified with a sacrifice of a dog and a jar of alcohol.
It is taboo to touch animal dung; the M'nong believe lightning will strike a person who does.[19]	The exception to this taboo is touching of animal dung used as fertilizer for the fields.

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
When a village is taboo, a cord is usually stretched across the village gate, or some sort of barrier will be erected to prohibit entrance.	Generally, outsiders are not permitted inside a M'nong village when a taboo is in effect. If the villagers expect a visitor, the tribesmen will go out to warn the outsider that the restriction is in effect.[20]
The M'nong women never eat with the men, because a woman can draw down the anger of the spirit which shows itself in certain dishes.[21]	
The M'nong refuse to carry away dead bodies of alien tribespeople for fear that evil spirits will haunt them.[22]	

The M'nong have also certain taboos which indicate that some days are not for work and that specific kind of meats or fruits are not to be eaten. However, such taboos are primarily clan customs and have limited applicability since they do not hold true for a village or a tribe as a whole.[23]

FOOTNOTES

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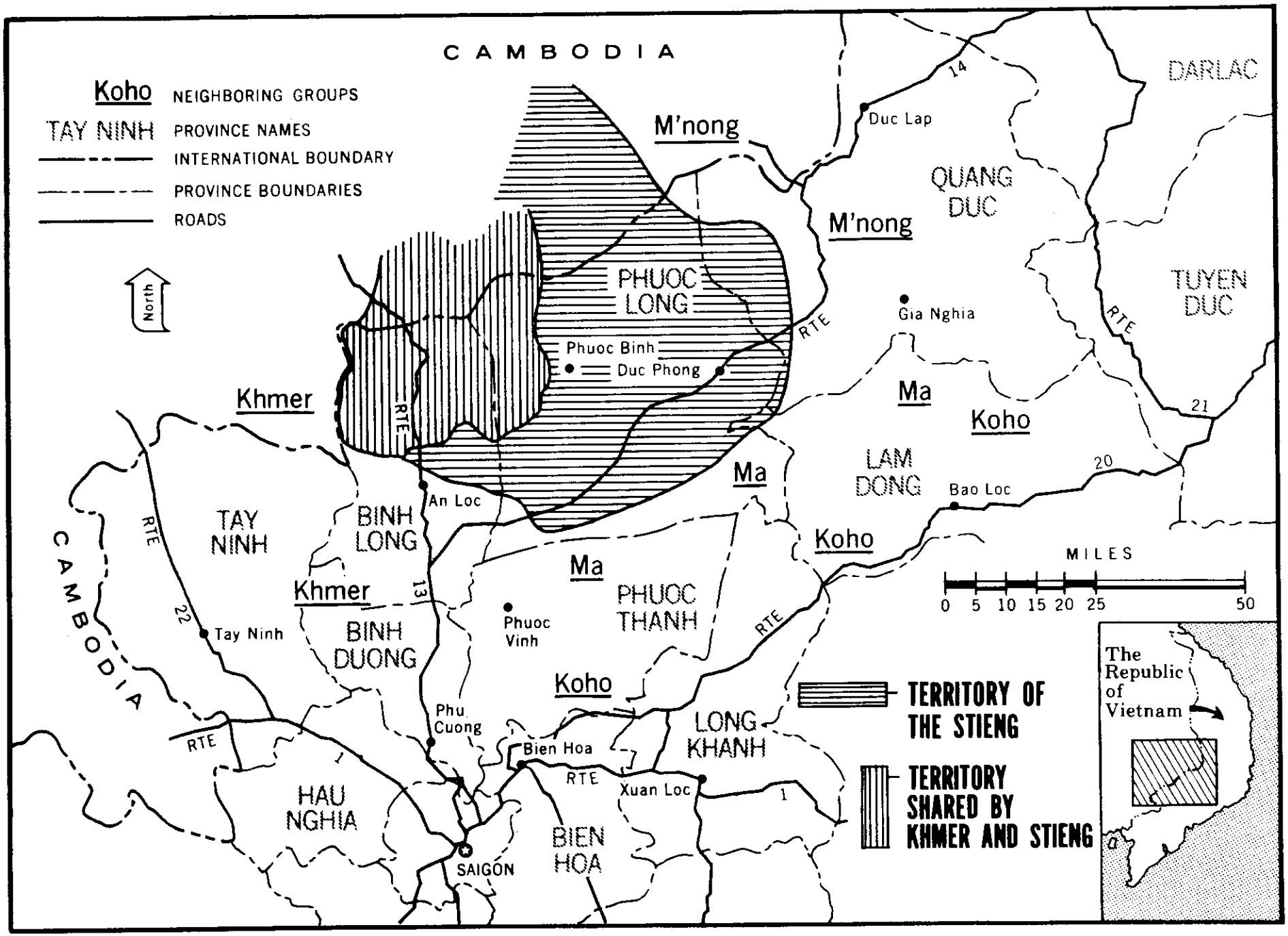
CAMBODIA
Koho NEIGHBORING GROUPS
TAY NINH PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
North
M'nong
Duc Lap
14
DARLAC
QUANG DUC
M'nong
TUYEN DUC
PHUOC LONG
Phuoc Binh
Duc Phong
RTE
Gia Nghia
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Bien Hoa
LONG KHANH
TERRITORY OF THE STIENG
TERRITORY SHARED BY KHMER AND STIENG
RTE
Xuan Loc
1
HAU NGHIA
SAIGON
BIEN HOA
The Republic of Vietnam

THE STIENG

STIENG

Psychological Characteristics

The Stieng are considered one of the more warlike tribes of the Republic of Vietnam.[1] By Western standards, the Stieng may appear lazy, for they do not submit to the observance of regular hours.[2] Judged by their performance of routine tasks, the Stieng are apathetic and seem incapable of sustained effort.[3]

The Stieng love their independence and will obey a chief's directions only if they agree with them. In disputes with chiefs, villages have been known to split or members have left the villages.[4] Stieng tribesmen are oriented toward the family and then toward the village.

Religious Beliefs

The life of the Stieng is dominated by their animistic belief that gods and spirits inhabit every animate and inanimate object. Sacrifices to placate spirits offended by violation of taboos are the primary religious ritual.

The most important Stieng spirits are those of the sun, moon, earth, sky, and lightning. The spirit of the sun is responsible for fertility; the spirit of the moon, for the rhythms of life, such as the calendar, vegetation, and crops; the spirit of the earth, for the growth of things; and the spirit of the sky, for agrarian rites. The spirit of lightning is especially feared by the tribesmen; if certain taboos are broken, the believe this spirit will strike down the guilty party.[5]

The Stieng also have numerous local spirits, including the spirits of the trees, ponds, rocks, and implements, that require certain behavior on the part of the tribesmen. For example, if a tree is to be cut down, the tribesmen will make a small sacrifice to the spirit of the tree in order

to avoid arousing its anger. These local spirits take their names from the objects they inhabit; for example, the spirit of a particular mountain is called yang (spirit) and the name of the mountain.[6] Evil spirits, or good spirits that are angered by the tribesmen, are believed to cause misfortune, illness, and death. The Stieng believe the evil spirits can "eat the soul" of a living man, thus bringing illness and death.[7]

Customs and Taboos

Numerous fears, superstitions, and prejudices are associated with the Stieng's animistic religion. The Stieng believe that good and evil spirits inhabit all the objects of their world, including such things as streams, rocks, the soil, crossbars, jars, and gongs. The evil spirits actively cause trouble for the man who fails to observe the appropriate actions when dealing with any object or when performing any task.

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
A person entering a taboo village is thereby responsible for any illnesses or accidents subsequently occurring in the village.[8]	That person has offended the spirits, who in retaliation cause illnesses and accidents.
Stieng food taboos are tigers, turtles, and domestic elephants.[9]	
The first seven days following the formal inauguration of a newly built village are sacred. It is also forbidden to bring in paddy, jar of rice wine, mortars, pestles, and winnowing baskets.[10]	No strangers are allowed to enter the village at this time. During this same period, there is no cooking in the houses, and no vegetables, pork, or chicken may be eaten.[11]
While sacrificial poles -- to which sacrificial buffaloes are tied -- are being built in the new village, all the men must sleep in the forest.	The sign outside the village warning strangers is a rope, intertwined with a handful of leaves, across the village gate.[12]

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
When a stranger comes to live permanently in a Stieng village, he must sacrifice a chicken or a pig and rice wine. He must then live in the field he is cultivating -- not within the confines of the village -- until the village is moved to a new location.[13]	In this way the stranger will not offend the evil spirits, and will avoid causing illness and accidents in the village.
A house is taboo for three days after the birth of a child or the birth of a buffalo or a pig belonging to the household.[14]	If the buffalo or pig is born in the forest rather than near the house, the house is not considered taboo.
No one may enter a hut on a cultivated field for three days after a child has been born in it.	
A house is taboo for three days after a sorcerer has conducted a healing ceremony in it.	Warnings that a house is taboo are a closed door and a bamboo pole, with leaves fastened at the top, stuck in the ground in front of the house.[15]
If a group of Stieng warriors en route to an attack saw something that might be an evil omen, the attack would be abandoned.[16]	It is not known what these omens are.
When an iguana or poisonous snake happens to enter a rice field, even at harvest time, the land is immediately abandoned.[17]	
If the oldest son of a family dies prematurely, the family must never again eat turtle-doves or salted fish.[18]	

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
If someone sneezes in a house, no one may go outside of the house immediately.[19]	If someone goes outside, the Stieng believe he will meet some evil spirit.
Entering the house of a sick person may cause his death.	
Children are forbidden to eat black rice-birds because their parents will die.[20]	There is no taboo, however, against adults eating these birds.
Three or thirteen pigs or chickens born of one litter cannot be raised.	Those numbers are considered bad luck in this connection; however, the numbers by themselves have no evil connotation.
If chickens spend the night outside of their coops, they must be killed the next day.[21]	
Cats cannot be bought, but money may be given before or after they are accepted. This is done to "fool" the previous owner of the cat so that the cat will not return to him.[22]	Cats are considered to be as valuable as a small pig.
Parrots flying over a village indicate that an attack by an enemy is imminent.	
Stieng believe that the world is flat, the sky is solid, stars are hung in the sky by string, and the moon and the sun are guided across the sky by ropes.[23]	
It is believed that all rivers run to an end, which is a great hole in the ground. There are people who guard this hole in order to prevent it from clogging up.	If the hole becomes clogged, there will be a flood.

Folk Beliefs	Commentary
When a baby dies his forehead is marked with ink or ashes.	When children with birthmarks are born to other families, there are supposedly the marked dead children who have come back to life.[24]
A wasp's nest hung by the doorway of a home will frighten away evil spirits.	
Waterfalls are haunted and every effort should be made to avoid them.[25]	
Certain trees deep in the forest are haunted and the Stieng will make large detours to avoid these trees. However, trees of the same species located in a village are not taboo.[26]	It is not known what particular species of trees the Stieng believe are haunted.
Yellow termites cause skin disease.	If the nest of termites can be discovered and destroyed, a person will be cured of the disease.
Curses which are taboo for the Stieng include: "May a tiger bite you" "You are a son of a tiger" "You are a son of a witch"[27]	These curses can be and are used only against strong enemies.

While Stieng tribesmen violating the taboos are punished, outsiders from a powerful group, such as the Vietnamese or Americans, are not usually held responsible for violations of tribal taboos. However, the Stieng long remember the person flouting their customs and may associate a particular group, as well as an individual offender, with the taboo violation.[28]

FOOTNOTES

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CONCLUSIONS

This compilation of some of the known customs and taboos of the Montagnard tribes residing along selected trails leading into the Republic of Vietnam has been prepared to meet the existing need to develop an assortment of specialized items which can be used by U.S. and other personnel for counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare.

Since this is a highly specialized field, it is beyond the technical competence of this writer to make specific suggestions for devices utilizing the concepts of tribal customs and taboos. Nevertheless, there are certain general areas which can be indicated as possible starting points for the development of various devices.

The animistic religion of the Montagnard tribes -- with its vast pantheon of good and evil gods and spirits inhabiting the tribal world -- provides numerous opportunities for developing imaginative devices for deterring or reducing the functioning effectiveness of the tribesmen. For instance, the Stieng fear the Spirit of Lightning because they believe if certain taboos have been broken, the Spirit will strike down the guilty party. Because of the great number of taboos the violation need not be conscious in order to incur the anger of the Spirit. The Halang, on the other hand, believe that powerful spirits dwell in old or large trees and in stones or roots of unusual shape or color. Any combination of these factors which the Halang cannot rationalize within their cultural context would most likely be feared and attributed to the work of some spirit which had been offended in some manner. Similarly, the Stieng believe that certain trees are haunted and thus must be avoided, while the Jarai fear being near or touching the big liana plant, ana khea, because it is the home of a powerful spirit which steals the souls of those who touch it.

Another potentially fruitful area to explore is omens and signs, which are manifested by the spirits in numerous ways. For instance, cries of certain animals and birds such as the howl of the roe-deer and the song of the m'lang bird are considered to be ill omens among the Rhade. The mere appearance of certain other animals such as monkeys, lizards, snakes, and tigers forecasts misfortune or even death for many of the tribesmen. Particular attention should be drawn to the potential of the tiger, which is greatly feared and which is believed by the M'nong and the Rhade to have supernatural powers.

While only the Sedang are known to make specific association between fire and an angry spirit, it would appear from the psychological make-up of the Montagnards, that a device, for instance, resembling a rock on the exterior, which could suddenly produce flames possibly changing from one color to another and emitting some type of sound would stun or frighten, at least momentarily, most tribesmen not previously exposed to extensive fireworks.

Still another possible area to be investigated for developing certain devices is the utilization of taboo signs on the trails. However, this presumes the knowledge of the specific trails to be used by an enemy as well as the identification of the tribesmen employed in this area, since the taboo signs differ from one tribe to another.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that there are several limitations in the development of any device directed against the tribesmen. First, the knowledge of Montagnard customs and taboos is haphazard and very limited in scope, dependent primarily on the availability of published sources. Furthermore, the information is incomplete because there is no data as to the general validity of these customs and taboos outside of a specific situation. For instance, does the appearance of a turtle outside

of a rice field also foretell a speedy death or is this concept of the Rhade solely applicable to the rice field? In addition, the applicability of certain customs and taboos is even further restricted because they are valid only for particular clans, even within the same tribe.

Secondly, the effectiveness of any one conceived device is limited in its utilization by the degree of exposure of the tribesmen to other cultures. For instance, tribesmen who in the past have been exposed to the French or are presently in fairly regular contact with either Vietnamese or Americans may not observe their tribal customs and taboos as closely as do the tribesmen living in greater isolation from outside influences.

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