THE STUDY OF A VIETNAMESE RURAL COMMUNITY– ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY

by
LLOYD W. WOODRUFF

Assisted by
NGUYEN NGOC YEN

ANNEX : VILLAGE GOVERNMENT IN VIET-NAM
— A SURVEY OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
VIET-NAM ADVISORY GROUP

May, 1960

VOLUME I Chapters I — VI

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Preface

As this study went into the publication stage major changes were being made in village administration in Khanh Hau that placed the data even farther into the past than would normally have been anticipated. This is one of the pitfalls faced by social scientists interested in describing on-going institutions, especially those of a developing nation.

The most outstanding changes that occurred during the writing phase of this study and that would have altered considerably the emphasis in some sections as well as have sharpened even more fully the discussions about the security problem in the southern provinces were: (1) an increase in the size of the Village Council and (2) a major strengthening of the Youth Group as a propaganda and security organization. As the writer understands the development, at a meeting of key administrators, probably province chiefs and heads of some central governmental agencies, in the western region of southern Viet-Nam, a decision was made to add three special commissioners to the Village Councils for the functions of Youth, Political Affairs, and Information. And probably at the same time a decision to begin a major training program for the members of the Youth Groups was initiated. As the writer observed in Khanh Hau, this training program was under the direction of military personnel (from Saigon, the writer was told) and was fairly intensive, consisting of three morning meetings each week. Village officials anticipated that in addition to participating in Youth Group activities these trainees would also be used to strengthen the Village system of self-defense. Thus, even though in the following study the writer has stressed the importance of security activities as a major factor in village administration, even more emphasis would have been placed on security if the study were to be revised.

Several minor changes also occurred in the basic organization and composition of the Village Council. The number of positions was reduced from five to four with the Village Chief at first absorbing the duties of the Finance Councillor and then later transferring those back to the newly appointed Finance Councillor but simultaneously taking over those of the Deputy Chief or Economics and Social Affairs Councillor. The original, that is, in terms of the starting of this study, Finance Councillor resigned in order to return to normal community life. The Deputy Chief resigned in order to assume the higher position of Deputy Canton Chief which seemed to be a mere stopping point until his appointment to the vacant post of canton chief would be approved. The final changes were the resignation of the Village Clerk who became the clerk for the

Canton Deputy and the ensuing appointment of, one of the most aggressive and extravert-type villagers, one of the few who could speak even a little French, to the post of Village Clerk. But still pending at the very last of the field research was another change--the resignation of the Village Chief, which, as last reported, had been rejected by the District Chief who had advised him to take some days of vacation and then return to his work. Whether the Village Chief was going to accept this or not remained to be seen. Thus, if this study were to have commenced at the time it ended, a much different view would have been obtained of the Village Council and of village administrative activities.

It should also be mentioned that the office of canton chief, the next step up in the administrative hierarchy of provincial administration, was in a period of fluctuation during this study. At the beginning the office was vacant and little indication was given that it would be refilled. The implicit assumption seemed that this level of administration would be allowed to disappear. Midway, the office was filled for a period of six months or so and then became vacant again. At the close, as indicated above, the office was apparently reactivated throughout the southern provinces. The result for Khanh Hau was the loss of its Deputy Chief who moved into cantonal administration. Because of its inactive status during most of the time, this study gave little heed to the canton and its relationship to village administration.

This was one of three parallel studies in the fields of economics, anthropology and sociology, and public administration undertaken by members of the MSUG staff working in close liaison with each other. The economic study, published in December, 1959, was prepared by Dr. James B. Hendry and the anthropological and sociological study to be published before this early in 1960, by Dr. Gerald C. Hickey. All three were part of a joint undertaking with the National Institute of Administration.

Special acknowledgement is given to the Rector of the Institute, Mr. Vu Quoc Thong, and the Vice Rector Mr. Nghiem Dang, for their help in getting the project established and to Messrs. Bui Quang An, Truong Ngoc Giau and Cao Huu Dong of the Institute faculty for their advice and cooperation during the period when field work was in progress. Thanks are also extended to the USOM Field Service Division for their logistical support and to the USOM Graphics Section for their help in preparing maps to illustrate the text. The writer is also grateful to a number of people who have worked on the project or who have offered advice and help at various stages, including Messrs. Bui Quang Da, Nguyen Van Thuan, Le Duc Gi, Tran Ngoc Phat of the Group staff. The entire stencil-cutting task was admirably performed by Le Thi Mai Anh.

Like his colleagues have already done, the writer wishes to stress the "preliminary" nature of this study. Without doubt before the final consolidated study is completed many changes will have to be made, as a result of corrections in data, in clarification of findings, and of additional insights obtained on the basis of opportunities for mutual exchange of knowledge, ideas, and opinions. All three of us strongly encourage and warmly welcome suggestions for improving the entire study.

To my two colleagues in this venture I wish to express my deep appreciation for the stimulus and guidance given me during the field research. To them must be given special acknowledgement for their successful efforts in establishing the fine community of feelings that existed between the Villagers and all members of the research staff. As author of this particular volume I assume, of course, complete responsibility for its contents.

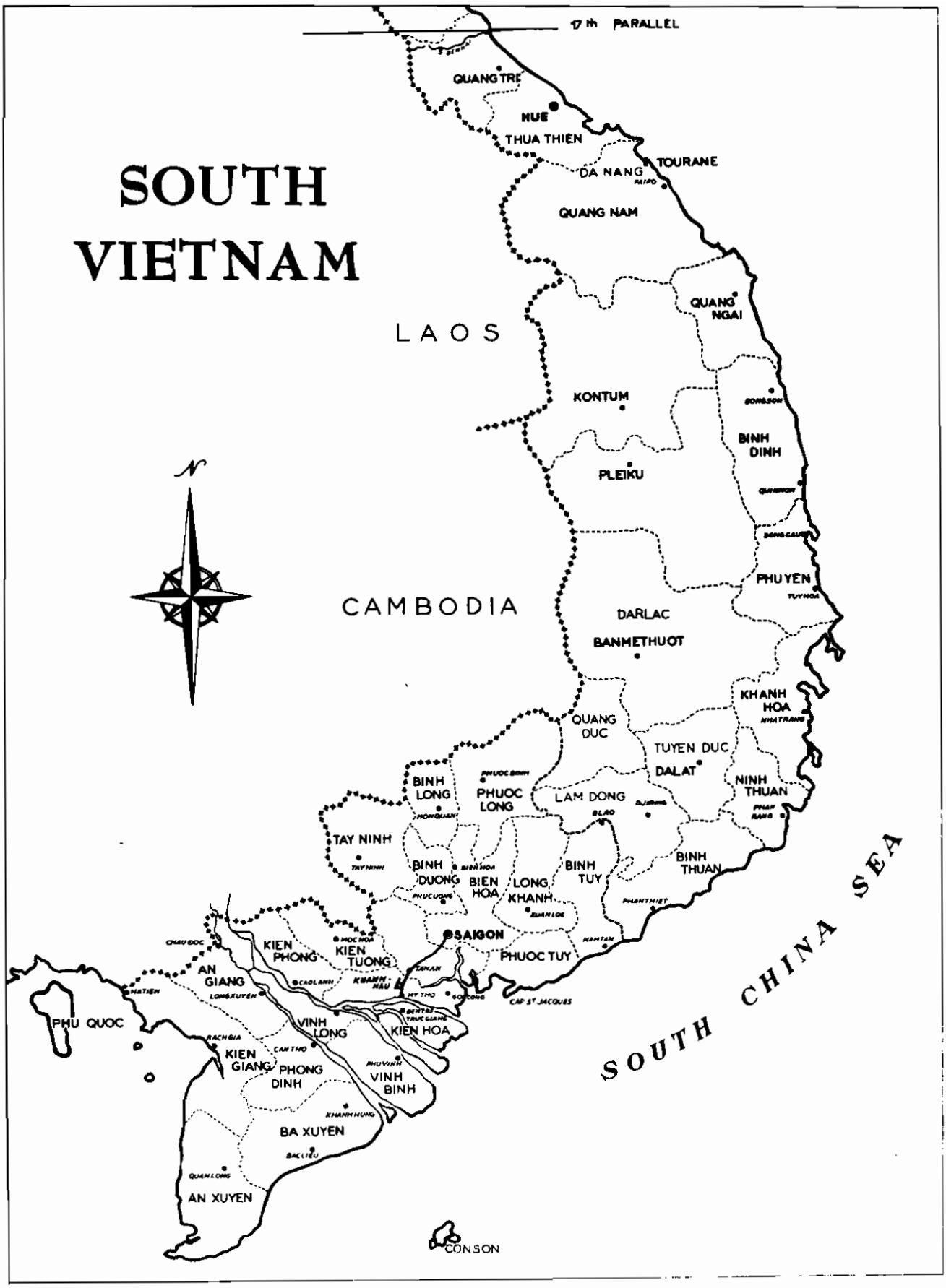
Saigon

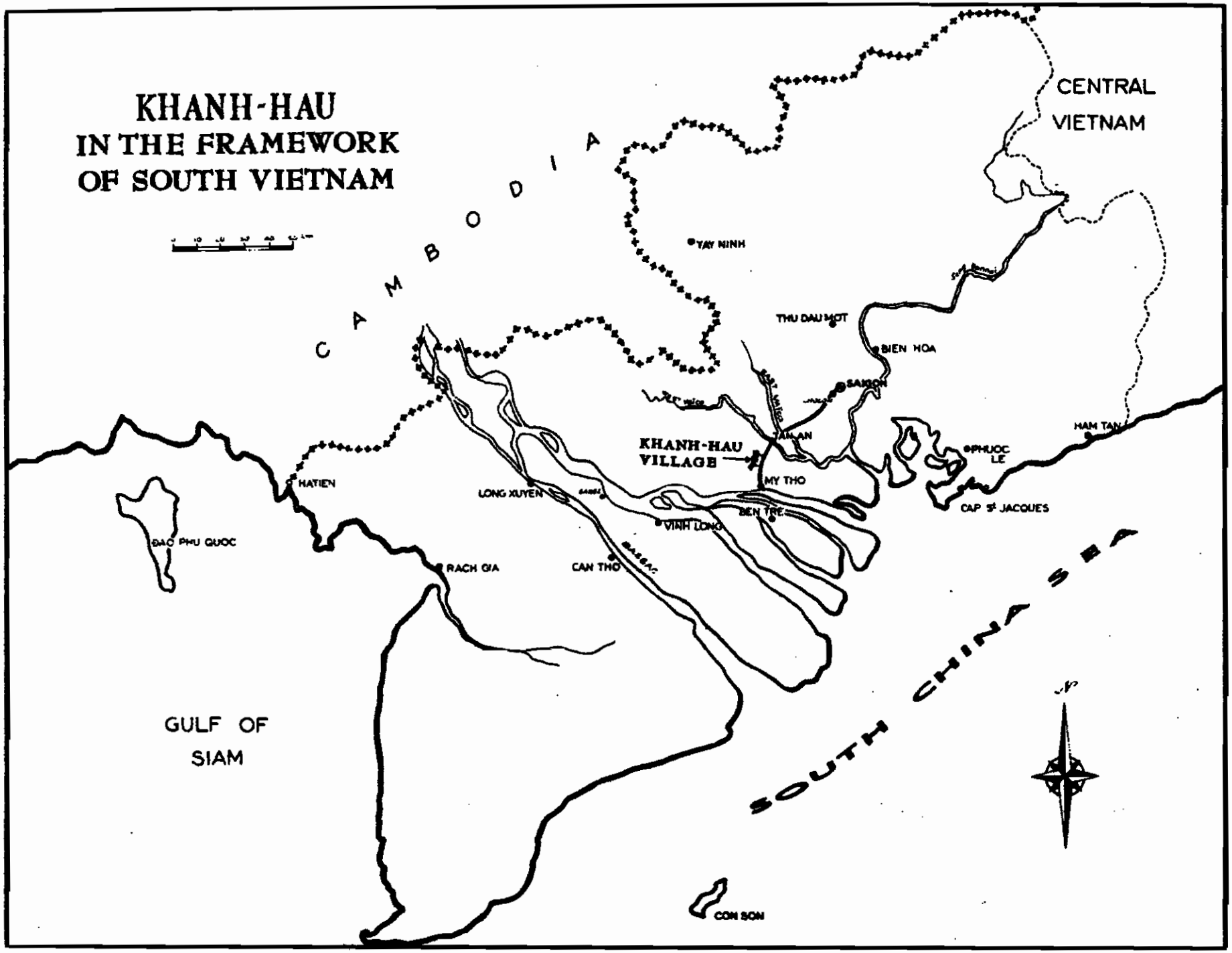
May 24, 1960

Table of Contents

Appendixes

List of Figures


SOUTH VIETNAM
17th PARALLEL
QUANG TRI
HUE
THUA THIEN
DA NANG
TOURANE
QUANG NAM
QUANG NGAI
LAOS
KONTUM
BINH DINH
PLEIKU
PHU YEN
CAMBODIA
DARLAC
BANMETHUOT
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
DALAT
NINH THUAN
BINH LONG
PHUOC LONG
LAM DONG
TAY NINH
BINH DUONG
BIEN HOA
LONG KHANH
BINH TUY
BINH THUAN
SAIGON
KIEN PHONG
KIEN TUONG
PHUOC TUY
AN GIANG
PHU QUOC
VINH LONG
KIEN HOA
KIEN GIANG
PHONG DINH
VINH BINH
BA XUYEN
AN XUYEN
CONSON
SOUTH CHINA SEA


KHANH-HAU
IN THE FRAMEWORK
OF SOUTH VIETNAM
CAMBODIA
CENTRAL
VIETNAM
TAY NINH
THU DAU MOT
BIEN HOA
SAIGON
KHANH-HAU
VILLAGE
TAN AN
MY THO
PHUOC
LE
HAM TAN
CAP St JACQUES
HATIEN
LONG XUYEN
VINH LONG
BEN TRE
DAO PHU QUOC
RACH GIA
CAN THO
GULF OF
SIAM
SOUTH CHINA SEA
CON SON

Chapter I

The Purpose of This Study

This study was initially proposed on a severely limited understanding of government in Viet-Nam since the writer had been here only a relatively short time, less than three months. At that time the proposal was motivated largely by the impression that more knowledge was needed about rural administration in Viet-Nam. More knowledge was needed not only by the academicians but also by the administrators themselves. For the charge had been heard about Viet-Nam--as about many other countries including western as well as eastern--that the general tendency was to centralize administration too much. Governmental administrators preferred remaining in the capitol city rather than going out into the hinterland. Professors, perhaps unknowingly and unintentionally, had encouraged this attitude by teaching mostly about the law and theory of governmental administration rather than the practice itself. A counterbalance to encourage the growth of a more outward and universal view of the governmental administration was needed.

A review of existing literature confirmed the view that most attention had been paid to the study of aspects other than those to be found by going out into the hinterland. For the most part, studies of government in Viet-Nam had been centered on the legal bases rather than on operating practices. Thus, the general orientation of this study was determined: to seek out knowledge about the nature of administration in the rural areas.

Shortly after this study had begun, however, evidence of the awareness of the central government in rural administration was presented to the writer. This was embodied in two articles prepared by the Secretary of the Department of Interior, the central governmental agency responsible for the general surveillance and direction of inferior governmental units throughout Viet-Nam.[1] Because these articles can be assumed as reflecting official thinking about rural administration in Viet-Nam, the writer considers them as among the most important publications available to the public on this particular subject. Some of the major highlights have been included in the immediately following paragraphs because of the excellent background they offer.

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[1]Lam Le Trinh, "Village Councils: Yesterday and Today," Viet-My, Parts I and II, Vol. 3.

The purpose of these two articles was to explain briefly both the historical development and the present condition of village administration throughout Viet-Nam. Following a customary pattern, the Secretary discussed separately the conditions in the three separate regions--the southern provinces, in which this study was located; the lowlands of the central region extending to the northern boundary that divides the two Viet-Nams and the highlands of the central region. In this review his observations about the highlands will be omitted since that area is not comparable to the other two.

In comparing the problems of village administration in the central lowlands and the southern provinces or delta region, the Secretary indicated far less concern about the former area. There the conditions were relatively satisfactory, especially when compared with the southern villages. The central villages, he wrote, enjoyed several advantages:[2]

1. It is easier to "mobilize" the villagers since the settlements cover a much smaller area. ("Mobilize" has proved a popular word, at least for translators. In this context the writer assumes it refers to the need for encouraging the growth of community development projects.)

2. The villages own a major proportion of the agricultural fields which provide income for their administration and a means for helping the poor.

3. The villagers are strongly opposed to the Communists for they have lived under a Communist dictatorship and are still aware of the imminent threat of Communists from the other side of the 17th parallel nearby.

4. The composition of the enemy forces is not as complex as in the southern provinces. The Communists carry out only underground activities. (As implied, in contrast, in the southern provinces anti-governmental forces have conducted a continuing campaign of terrorism, involving frequent assasinations of hamlet, village, and district administrators.)

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[2]Ibid., II, 67.

5. Financial administration is more simplified and more dependeable because of the resources at the village level. In addition, village officials receive fair salaries and allowances.

In short, he viewed the central lowland villages as in much better condition partly because of their strength--their financial resources were more adequate since they owned larger amounts of revenue producing agricultural fields and partly because their situation vis a vis the Communist threat, an aspect that precludes clarifying without considerable elaboration of the post World War II history of Viet-Nam. Suffice it to say that, as the Secretary indicated, the problem of security in rural areas was viewed as less serious in the central than in the southern provinces.

The Secretary also mentioned in his discussion of the central lowlands the variation in its pattern of local administration from what he viewed as the uniform system prescribed in national regulations. He recognized, in short, a difference between the theory and the practice and the differences were implicity condoned. At this stage, these variations do not have any material significance. They included an increase in the responsibility of the chief of village councils, the use of an elected advisory council in village affairs, and the development of an intermediate administrative unit lying between the villages and the next higher agency, the districts. This new unit was called (at least in one province) the Nha Dai-dien Hanh-chinh. He contrasted these developments with the more traditional pattern found in the southern provinces.

Parenthetically it should be added that other observers have described the provinces in the central lowlands as "more progressive" because of the various experiments being made in the administration of local services. Presumably, the habit of experimenting grew from the status of financial independence from the central government.

Viewing the southern provinces, the Secretary identified as the two most crucial problems the lack of security and of financial resources. Both were impediments to the improvement of village administration. Some steps had been taken to solve both problems but they still existed. These included: (1) a reorganization of provincial and some district boundaries for two purposes: to improve the administrative systems and to give a psychological boost to the inhabitants since with the reorganization came a change in names, a step that was intended to show the elimination of French control; (2) the creation of some new districts and villages, the latter

having a controlled minimum population of 5,000 which was intended to assure the establishment of more adequate units for local administration; and (3) the establishment of mutual assistance funds as a means for transferring funds from the more wealthy to the impoverished village. This fund, the Secretary mentioned, was viewed as only a temporary measure since its disadvantages--the hardships imposed on the wealthier villages--was recognized by the government as an unfair burden.

Along with these two problems, the Secretary admitted the difficulty of obtaining qualified villagers to serve on the village council. Although he did not interrelate these various problems, one can assume that the first two were major determinates of the last. In view of security and financial difficulties, villagers were not, to say the least, enthusiastic about assuming governmental positions in the community.

It is also worth noting the comments of the Secretary about future developments in village administration, especially to determine, at least by inference, what aspects he viewed as in need of change. In essence, it is fair to say that he identified three major areas for development: (1) the membership of village councils; (2) the financial resources of villages; and (3) the organization and consolidation of hamlets.

In his opinion the quality of members could be increased in two ways: by increasing the amount of training and the salary levels. Both ways should be emphasized since, as he contended, the position of village councillor had changed from one bearing hardly any duties of importance to one burdened with many and with this change had come an attachment of a more "noble character" to the role of village councillor, formerly having largely only honorific significance.

The problem of inadequate financial resources was in his opinion a problem of inadequate local sources, which by inference was casting out consideration of increasing financial grants and aids from higher levels of administration, such as the district, province, and central government. In his view, each village should become self-sufficient for:[3]

> It is only with self-sufficiency that an administrative unit can progress rapidly, especially in the

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[3]A message sent to the budget bureau of the central government as quoted in Lam Le Trinh, _____ p. 69. Original source as cited by Secretary Trinh was Memorandum 2991--BPTTT/VP/MX December 23, 1957.

> social and economic fields... the population will be satisfied to see that their own contribution has been used in the construction of works for the province and village, and that their own efforts and sacrifices have brought direct benefit.

Two types of solutions for expanding local sources of revenues might be increasing (1) the income properties of the villages, namely, the communal rice fields but also, where appropriate, other types such as rubber plantation, and commercial forests, and (2) the village share of tax revenues. Presumably both were already being considered by the Department.

Extremely interesting to this writer was the Secretary's view that the hamlet was a key unit for future development. The Secretary offered the observation that the hamlet should be developed for it was the "real unit which can get things done." The village could provide security and obtain the general support of the people (the meaning of the latter was not clear) but it was to the hamlet the Government should turn for future thinking about social and economic progress in the communities. Although no suggestions were offered as to how the hamlet might be developed, the Secretary stated that its status was being studied.

This analysis and discussion of village problems offered by the Secretary to the general public forced the writer, in effect, to modify his earlier criticism of the tendency of administrators to concern themselves only with the legal and theoretical aspects of village life. In these articles the Secretary displayed considerable knowledge about the real life problems of village administration. In view of his comments, the writer amended his judgment about existing knowledge of village administration: it is apparent that the government, in particular the Department of the Interior, has made a major effort to seek out information about conditions in the rural areas. As the Secretary indicated, the Department had become not only aware of existing patterns of administration but also had identified problems and begun considering solutions. It is appropriate, therefore, at this point to explain more fully the specific purpose of this present study.

First, it should be said that regardless of the correction needed in the judgments of the writer about the extent of existing knowledge on the subject of rural administration, the original purpose of this study was not greatly modified. This inflexibility can be defended at least in part on the grounds that although much knowledge might exist about rural administration, most of it is still

confined to the administrators themselves. Relatively little has been made available to the general public through such media as articles, reports, and textbooks. Thus, while the administrators might not need to have the type of information to be obtained from this study, it still should be of some value to those outside the agencies. In particular students of administration should receive some additional enrichment by examining this.

As the title indicated, this is a study of administration in one rural village--and that might be amplified by adding, small, southern village. In essence what this study represents is an attempt to develop an understanding of one rather minute segment of government in Viet-Nam.

Because of the conditions under which this study occurred --that is the writer was a member of an American technical assistance group--it is essential to note clearly the end objective set for this study insofar as improvement in governmental administration may be concerned. To the point, the question may be asked as to the contribution this study makes to the development of a more effective system of government in Viet-Nam. This can be answered rather tersely by saying that this study must be viewed as oriented toward "basic" rather than "applied" research: in sharp contrast to most studies prepared thus far by members of this technical assistance group this study does not contain a series of recommendations regarding governmental improvements. This study ends short of that step. Instead its objective was centered on adding to the amount of existing knowledge. The writer hopes, of course, that this addition will give some worthwhile guidance to persons concerned with making administrative reformsas well as to students interested in becoming more acquainted with the existing system. In fact, changing his own role somewhat, the writer himself intends to prepare an ensuing study that will be aimed more directly at village reform. Without doubt this present study will provide much background data as well as suggested lines of approach for it.

In the opinion of the writer, the major contribution of this study is to be found in the detail it contains about various aspects of village administration. Insofar as the writer could determine, this represents the breaking of "new ground" in village research in Viet-Nam. Although the Secretary of the Interior Department displayed awareness of existing practices, he did not attempt to offer detailed data as such. His interests were not oriented in that direction for he was writing and thinking as an administrator rightly concerned with the problems of improving the existing system --and explaining those problems to a broad audience.

Thus, to develop this study most emphasis was placed on attempting to tell the reader about the nature of administrative activities. This was done by placing stress on describing and analyzing rather than on criticizing, evaluating, and proposing.

As a study of administration, within the village the focal point was the activities of the village council, the key village administrative agency. As to the council the writer kept searching for information about the various aspects of its operations. What were its functions? How did it conduct its affairs? Before much time had expired, the writer found that the word "council" did not portray the actual pattern of village administration for seldom did the members function as a collective body or council. Instead most activities were done by members as individuals assigned to certain specific tasks. In the parlance of Anglo-Saxon administration, the council might have been more appropriately described as a board of commissioners--a term that implies both governing and administering responsibilities.

This emphasis on the "administrative" aspects of the village council limited the study more than many students of rural communities like to see, for the writer did not attempt to relate administrative actions to the, perhaps more important and at least broader setting, of political and social behavior in the community. Several reasons can be offered in defense of this limitation.

First, two research impediments encouraged limiting this study to the more concrete, that is, to administrative aspects: (1) the need for conducting almost all research through an interpreter; and (2) the limited appreciation of Vietnamese culture.

The former meant not only a reduction in the amount of research that could be conducted but also a possible loss in the quality--in the accuracy of communications and in the development of insights. In the opinion of the writer this reduction in quality could be offset somewhat by refraining from venturing into the more abstract aspects of social science research as would be involved in an examination of such political phenomena as the power structure in the village and the views, attitudes, and opinions of the villagers toward various political concepts and ideas. Likewise, limiting the study to the administrative aspects also meant reducing the need for developing an understanding of basic, social cultural patterns of the villagers which would have been a prerequisite to any broader study of village political behavior.

Second, the Province Chief himself in an early interview requested the research group to avoid the subject of "politics." The group should feel free to examine the economic, social, and administrative aspects but it should refrain from going into political matters. No attempt was made to seek a more precise definition of what the Chief meant by his reference; instead it was assumed that the team was not to explore such questions as the attitudes of the villagers toward the government and toward the problems resulting from the division of Viet-Nam.

Third, to the extent that the power structure or the identification of the elite of the community would be examined it was more logical to leave this labor with another member of the research group--Dr. Gerald Hickey, the anthropologist, who already well versed in Vietnamese cultural patterns would be approaching this from the more non-political side of family and other social patterns.

There is, therefore, a recognized shortcoming in this study of administration. It was made more or less in an artificially created, a research designed, vacuum separating arbitrarily local administration from its natural socio-political milieu. As a result this study does not throw much light on such an important issue as the making of major decisions in the community or on another as how to identify key points of influence in this particular village. Regardless of their vital importance to a study of community life, these aspects were neither explored nor related to the on-going system of administration.

However, within the limited scope accepted for this study the writer attempted to roam widely in order to learn as much as possible about this one portion of life in Khanh Hậu. In so long as research leads--comments made by village officials during interviews, items noted in correspondence, observed patterns of behavior such as displayed by a citizen talking with a village official--seemed related to the area of administration, the writer felt free to deviate from whatever the topic of research might have been in order to see what unanticipated aspects of village administration might be uncovered. Through much of the research phase the spirit of a "non-directed" interview was followed once the interviewee had begun responding to the questions of the writer.

The resulting shape of this study, therefore, depended considerably on what knowledge was gained about administrative life in the village rather than in answer to any pre-fixed framework of research. This, to be sure, invites criticism in that it suggests a void of systematic guidance and analysis.

But the writer believes this criticism, though sound in itself, is offset by the various examples, analyses, and observations about administrative patterns to be found in this study, which might have been omitted if the research had been more narrowly confined. The writer quite willingly leaves to later research ventures the more rigid processes intended for testing and evaluating systematically various hypotheses about village administration. This study should serve as a source of supply for the formulation of such plans for further research.

During this study the mechanics of research involved largely the use of two research processes: the interviewing of local officials and the analysis of documents and other records, including correspondence found in the Village Hall. These were enriched on occasion by personal observations which included the verbatim recording of discussions occurring in the Village Hall and of speeches made by village as well as higher level officials. Much of the interviewing was done over morning tea--lasting, however, from one to three hours. The writer and his interpreter upon arriving in the Village Hall would be invited to sit down for tea--from then until time for departure he would talk with whomever also partook of tea. Consciously an effort was made on many occasions to keep the "interviewing" on such an informal basis in order to encourage openness in the discussion. (Like other members of the research team the writer avoided wearing the type of clothing that would tend to tag him as having some official position in a governmental agency.) The most important documents and records obtained from the Village were the correspondence files, financial journals, and some special files, in particular one pertaining to civil disputes brought before a member of the Council.

Beyond the efforts mentioned above for encouraging the establishment of rapport with the village officials, the writer also accepted invitations for attending various ceremonies and special dinners. On one occasion he and the other members of the research team at the invitation of the Village Chief donned the traditional mandarin garb worn by village notables for participation in a major annual ceremony, the "Request for Peace." Along with villagers, the writer marched in the processions, brought incense before the alter and partook of the ceremonial rice.

To illustrate the importance given to empirical research in this study, roughly about one-half of the data came from interviews, one-quarter from observations, and the other quarter from documents and records, most of which were obtained from the Village Hall. In essence, therefore, heavy emphasis

throughout was placed on getting information from the Village itself rather than from archives and secondary sources.

Every reader is free, of course, to make his own evaluation of the results. However, the writer wishes to offer some observations about this research venture. In part these are offered in anticipation of certain types of criticisms.

First, there is a question as to the accuracy of the data regardless of whether it came from interviews or from records. Under ideal conditions all research data would be cross-checked, of course: statements made by one interviewee would be tested by asking others; and records would be verified by one or more of various methods, common to auditors. However, for the most part such checks were not made. Instead the writer acted on what he considered a reasonable assumption: that oral statements and records were accurate, unless some indication to the contrary was noted. Aware of this limitation, the writer on many occasions resorted to such qualifying phrases as "according to the chief of police... and "as stated in the financial journal." When apparent inaccuracies were noted, the writer either conducted further research or forewarned the reader.

The problem of communication between the writer and the interviewee was probably a more serious limitation. On many occasions because of the need for talking through an interpreter the writer is certain that he failed to obtain or to give the complete image of the subject at hand. This was particularly so when dealing with subjects that involved a mixture of "is" and "ought" statements. To be sure, further and persistent questioning helped to clarify such difficulties yet the writer is still inclined to believe that on some matters the distinction was never fully made. In addition, at times confusion occurred on the meaning of terms because of the difficulties involved in attempting to translate fully and accurately concepts from English and American culture to Vietnamese and the culture of Viet-Nam.

And, finally, the problem of security without doubt affected the preparation of this study. While the Village of Khanh Hậu was viewed by provincial as well as village officials as a relatively secure village--a village free from terroristic activities of anti-governmental forces--nevertheless, the problem of security served as a key determinant to much of the patterns of the behavior, at least of administrative behavior, in the village. Thus, without a full appreciation of what was involved in the administration of security programs the writer lacked a frame of reference for grasping the full meaning of village administrative practices.

The actual content as well as the arrangement of this study is fairly well shown in the table of contents. In the next two chapters the writer has devoted considerable effort to providing background material. These deal with the administrative setting of the national as well as lower levels of administration within which the Village of Khanh Hậu should be viewed plus some of the historical development of village government in Viet-Nam. The latter should be considered in part as a supplement to the more inclusive historical analysis prepared by Miss Nguyen Xuan Dao, "Village Government in Viet-Nam: A Study of Historical Development," which has been included as an Annex. The additional information prepared by the writer deals more fully with the immediate roots of the present system, in particular with the relation of village administrative councils to the traditional council of notables. While the data for that analysis came from general sources, nevertheless, it probably represents fairly well the evolution that occurred in Khanh Hậu.

Chapter II

Administrative Organization

Although the focal point of this study was the Village Council of Khanh Hậu, it is desirable to present first the broader setting of governmental organization and administration in Viet-Nam. Even though the following sketch does not present anything new for the informed student of Viet-Nam government, nevertheless, it may serve to remind him that village administration does not take place in a vacuum and that to have studied fully the conduct of village administration one would perforce have had to trace the many administrative and political lines connecting the central, provincial, village and hamlet agencies.[1]

Central and Provincial Administration

The Republic of Viet-Nam came into existence on October 26, 1955, when Ngo Dinh Diem, chosen by the people three days before as Chief of State, proclaimed its establishment. Five months later a Constituent Assembly was elected by the people and on October 26, 1956, the first anniversary of Independence, the Constitution of the Republic was adopted by the Assembly. With its adoption, Ngo Dinh Diem became the first President and the Constituent Assembly, the first National Assembly. As one well-informed political scientist has written, the central theme of the Constitution and thus of the Government was executive leadership and control:[2] the powers and duties of the legislative body were overshadowed by those of the President even in the field of law-making; the organization of independent courts was not satisfactorily set forth and would depend, therefore, on statutory law; and individual rights were so qualified so that only in time would one be able to

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[1] A major step toward such a study is being made by Nicholass Luykx, a graduate student from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. As part of a comparative study of local administration of several major governmental programs in Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, Mr. Luykx is studying provincial and village administration in the central lowland province of Thua Thien.

[2] J. A. C. Grant, "The Viet-Nam Constitution of 1956," American Political Science Review, LII, No.2 (June, 1958) pages437-462.

determine the pattern. A "key" to most of the constitutional provisions was the one-sentence provision inserted in a basic article dealing with the balance of powers between the President and the Assembly. It stated that "The President is vested with leadership of the Nation."[3] As in effect provided by the Constitution the first President may serve for a maximum of 15 years, two terms of five years each subject to the approval of the electors beginning in 1961. Ensuing Presidents may serve for a similar maximum. The deputies to the National Assembly while enjoying only three year terms may be re-elected without limitation. Statutory provisions have fixed the number of deputies at 123 and designed their constituencies based largely on the objective of equal representation.

While efforts were definitely and successfully made to shift away from French patterns of governmental organization,[4] for example, to avoid any semblance to a parliamentary system of cabinet responsibility, and toward the American system of an independent executive, the administrative pattern and processes still retained much of the flavor of French influence--influence of the former colonial period as well as of academic training in French law (if any training at all in law) received by almost all of the university trained administrative officials. French administrative practices, in fact, pervaded the entire system. In Viet-Nam one spoke of "arretes," "decrees," "cadres," and "functionnaires," terms not found in Anglo-Saxon and American administrative parlance. In short while some basic deviations occurred, the internal system of administration remained patterned mostly after systems implanted by the French and adapted by French trained and schooled administrators.

With a national population of an estimated 12 million to serve, the Government had divided its operating responsibilities largely between a set of some 24 to 30 key administrators located in the capitol and 38 provincial chiefs, including the mayor or prefect of the City of Saigon. Closely annexed to this group were 13 quasi-independent or semi-autonomous agencies distinguished primarily by their reasonably independent control of operations once their overall budgets had

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[3]Ibid 445. Reference was to Article 3, "Basic Provisions," The Constitution of the Republic of Viet-Nam, 1956.

[4]Ibid 448.

been approved. These included the railroads, the national bank, the two universities, and the Chamber of Commerce (that is, a French-styled Chamber of Commerce.). The complete list of the 13 major departments as of July 1, 1958, read as follows: National Defense; Public Works and Communication; Justice; Finance; Labor; Information and Youth; Interior; Agriculture; Land Registration and Agrarian Reforms; National Education; Public Health; Foreign Affairs; and National Economy. A set of eight interministerial committees and 10 agencies grouped in the Office of the President completed the overall organization of the central administration.

Since the Department of Interior served as locus parentis for village administration, it is worth noting briefly its major internal divisions and its functions. As stated in the government manual the department had three major responsibilities:[5] 1. the maintenance of internal public order and security; 2. the control of political organizations and associations in the nation and the organization of referendums and elections[6] and 3. the establishment and supervision of the administrative units and agencies of the national government. Headed by a Secretary responsible to the President, the Department was divided into two branches of Administration and Internal Security. It is the former branch that was concerned with the general administration of the villages and with changes in basic statutory as well as administrative regulations appropos to local administration. In addition it was responsible for coordinating field programs of other Departments. The Internal Security Branch, as its title stated, centered its activities on problems of safeguarding the people and the nation. Its major substantive activities were administered by three "Services"--Political Affairs, Control, and Entrance and Exit of Foreign Residents. Included in the work of the Political Affairs Service were the direction of activities of security agencies, the study of political problems, and the supervision of political reduction camps;

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[5]National Institute of Administration, Viet-Nam Government Organization Manual, 1957-58, p. 80.

[6]The word "control" is found in the translation. English translation - perhaps, it does not carry the exact meaning of the Vietnamese text.

the Control Service concerned itself with the control of "associations, unions, meetings, press, radio, and movies" as well as weapons and ammunition.[7]

Before turning to an examination of provincial administration, a few comments should be said about the broader subject of "field administration." While the provinces were the major components, "field administration" was actually a more complex pattern. To more adequately describe it one would have to obtain much more data about the actual organizational pattern of relationships between technical or functional and general administrative agencies, that is, between such as education and the Administration Branch of the Department of Interior, which, as has been noted, was responsible for coordinating the field programs of other Departments. Also one would need to determine the extent to which various Departments have established intermediate offices between the central government and the provinces, interprovincial offices, and agencies in the central government that directly perform all phases of field operations. In addition, the current role of the regional delegues--formerly positions of considerable importance--would have to

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[7]As yet no overall examination of public administration in Viet-Nam has been prepared; hence without considerable research it would be impossible to go beyond this limited discussion based largely on legal references. Up to present most emphasis of the Michigan State University Group has been placed on preparing studies designed more to point to ways for improving rather than to illuminate the actual practices. Likewise, insofar as the writer was able to determine, materials prepared in Vietnamese also fall into such a category, or at least fail to provide any well-rounded view of actual practices. In the offing, however, is a general introduction to administrative behavioral patterns which is being prepared by Professor John Dorsey, former Chief of the Public Administration Division, Michigan Group. Also additional knowledge will be made available in the texts being prepared by faculty members of the National Institute of Administration which although intended primarily for instructional purposes will undoubtedly serve as guides to insights into existing administrative operations. In addition, two current periodicals of considerable value are: Administrative Research, Journal of the Association for Administrative Studies, National Institute of Administration, Saigon; and Administrative Studies Journal published by the Department of Interior, Saigon.

be understood: prior to 1955 there was to considerable extent a pattern of general administrative decentralization involving the regional positions.[8] And more recently a tendency to return to the former pattern seemed to be suggested by the installation of two regional administrators in the southern provinces whose positions were created because of the need for coordinating governmental forces involved in security administration.

In addition, the operations of the Prefecture of Saigon and the municipalities of Hue, Dalat, and Danang would merit separate treatment: the Saigon Prefecture because of its significance not only as the seat of government but also as the nation's only metropolitan area, having about 1.5 million inhabitants; Hue and Dalat because of their present quasi-integration with provincial administration, being headed by the province chiefs; and Danang because of its functioning as an isolate entirely separate from provincial organization.[9] If all of these were examined, then one would be well prepared to appreciate the true role of the provinces.

Some details of provincial administration will be noted in the following section which deals with the province within which Khanh Hậu village was located. At this point, however, a few general observations will be made about the pattern throughout Viet-Nam.

There has been nothing particularly sacrosanct about provincial boundaries. Changes have been made almost at will in boundaries as well as in names. Parts of the 38 provinces, furthermore, have been and may be shaved off existing provinces in order to create an entirely new province. Thus, one could view the provinces largely as flexible administrative areas subject to alterations at any time. However, a certain degree of area rigidity probably will develop as the program of provincial headquarters building construction nears completion.

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[8]Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group, "Recommendations Concerning the Department of Interior, The Regions, and Provinces," 137 Pasteur, Saigon, 1956, (various pages, in particular those in Part II, "Background Information," beginning with "The Regions.") (Mimeo.)

[9]A study of Saigon government has been prepared by Professor Tran Van Dinh: Saigon Prefectoral Administration, National Institute of Administration, 1959, 104 pp. Typewritten English translation is on file in the library of the National Institute of Administration.

Throughout Viet-Nam considerable variation was found in provincial characteristics, such as shape, size, and population. Central lowland provinces had their long axes parallel to the coastline. In the southern delta region in sharp contrast, some of these became perpendicular to the coastline. With the exception of the much larger provinces in the highlands, the general variation in land areas probably extended from about 900 to 1500 square kilometers--a pattern fairly similar to that of counties in midwestern states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Without any satisfactory census, population estimates remained highly vulnerable, but it is fair to say the range probably varied from 150,000 to close to one million inhabitants most of whom were living in relatively small rural communities and settlements.

The Province of Long An

This is the province in which Khánh Hậu village was located. The province was relatively new, having been created out of the two former provinces of Tan An and Cholon in 1956 when a general reorganization occurred. During the time of this study the provincial headquarters plant was in the process of construction and expansion.

Various characteristics

Perhaps the most unique feature of the province was its geographical pattern. It was the only southern province and one of the four in the nation which stretched all the way from the South China Sea to the border of a neighboring country. For Long An the neighbor was Cambodia, whereas for the others Laos was the adjoining nation. Its long axis was about 80 kilometers and its short axis about 30 kilometers. The province contained about 280,000 hectares. Various meandering streams and rivers--one almost matching the long axis--provided important means of transportation within the province and via the sea and another river to metropolitan Saigon, the main ocean port for the southern provinces. By land the nearest provincial boundary was located about 40 kilometers southwest of Saigon, a distance requiring about one hour and a quarter to cover. Although the province was cut by two major routes, the intra-provincial road network for the most part consisted of rough-gravel and dirt roads. Travelers from the provincial headquarters to remote areas sometimes would make a long detour into the suburban area of Saigon in order to avoid the local road system. On the other hand movement to and from Saigon to the provincial seat was extremely easy and rapid. Some provincial administrators, in fact, commuted daily, using

either the trains or buses. A marshland on the Cambodian end, forests and lowland near the sea, and a flat, low plateau in the center made up the dominant features of the terrain. With a population of about 430,000 (including 2,400 Chinese and 24 Frenchmen in 1957) the province could be viewed as one of middle size.

Typical of all southern provinces the major industry of Long An was agriculture. Altogether about 140,000 hectares or 60 percent of the area was used for the cultivation of rice. Secondary crops of sugar cane and various fruits, largely pineapple, accounted for 6,000 hectares. Abandoned land--land vacated during the war years--accounted for another 6,000 hectares, although it was the expectation of local administrators that about one-half of this would be back in cultivation within a year or two. A scattering of small industries, including 18 sugar refineries, 7 brick kilns, 22 fish oil factories, and over 3,000 small retail shops completed the economic pattern.

Like most provinces, Long An lacked a major urban center, Its provincial seat, contained not more than 30,000 population, The provincial seat's degree of urbanization and industrialization can be indicated by its severely limited supply of water and electricity: the entire community enjoyed only one major well of some two hundred meters in depth and electrical power only during the early evening hours. Both sources of supply were located in or near the provincial headquarters. For the entire province only five generators were available and they served only four communities.

Organization and Services

Following the remarkably uniform pattern of provincial organization in the southern provinces, Long An contained an administrative hierarchy headed by the provincial offices and extending down through a multitude of hamlets, with intervening levels of districts, cantons, and villages.[10] And one might

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[10]A limited description of provincial organization for the Province of Dinh Tuong, which adjoined Long An on the far side from Saigon, was prepared by the Michigan Group in 1957. A comparison with its findings showed a remarkable similarity between the two provinces. For the English reader, the report is equally valuable for the translations it contains as appendices of several basic governmental documents regarding local administration. Michigan State University Viet-Nam Advisory Group, "Administrative Organization in the Province of My-Tho" (now Dinh Tuong), 137 Pasteur, Saigon, February, 1957, 46pp. (mimeo.)

justifiably extend the pattern on downward to the sub-hamlet level of five families. Altogether the province contained seven districts, 18 cantons or an average of two and one half cantons per district, 101 villages, and about 1400 hamlets. Although the actual number was not obtained, it was likely that about 80,000 heads of five family groups could be added to this enumeration. While the administrative pattern was uniform, other characteristics of these sub-units varied considerably. District populations, for example, ranged from 31,000 to 100,000 and district areas from 10,000 to 65,000 hectares. Although not a complete correlation, in the absence of urbanized areas, a fairly close parallel existed between area and population, the variation being caused largely by the sparsely populated marshlands near the Cambodian border.

Provincial level organization in Long An Province was headed by an administrative officer, called the chief of province who was appointed by the President and who had direct contact with the Presidency although he also worked with and usually through the central government's Department of Interior. Both military and civilian agencies operated under his general administrative surveillance regardless of any close technical lines of relationships with their own immediate superiors. In Long An as in some other provinces the chief was a relatively high ranking officer in the armed forces. He was immediately supported by two deputy chiefs, one for military and security and the other for all other functions. The former was also a military officer.

A staff meeting of provincial administrators in Long An would bring together about 18 to 22 executives, not including the chiefs of the districts, from the following services and agencies:

Civil Guard
Gendarmerie
Police
Security
Public Health
Veterinary
Agricultural Extension
Agriculture and Rice
Land Registration and Agrarian Reform
Public Works
Reconstruction
Primary Education
Youth and Sports
Information
Civic Action
Tax
Administration

With the exception of the Tax and Administration agencies, these were described by a provincial administrator as "national services," that is, enjoying a separation from general administrative lines of authority, the latter leading through the chief of province. Budgetary relationships, broadly speaking,

followed this same pattern. No attempt was made, however, to explore the actual operations or even the theory of provincial supervision and control of national services. A general observation, frequently heard in Viet-Nam, was the "boss" concept of the province chief, even with respect to the most closely knit central-provincial technical service networks. This powerful position, various observers suggested, was due to the urgency of security matters. Apart from the Civil Guard, a military organization, these agencies, and possibly some part-time workers including skilled as well as non-skilled, contained an operating force of some 1,300 employees, the great bulk of which, about 60 percent, were school teachers, and another significant portion, about 10 percent being part-time first-aid agents. The more "pure" office bureaucracy, located in the environs of the provincial headquarters, for all of these agencies other than the military probably did not exceed 125 persons and of this total 44 were in the non-national services, that is, the various bureaus directly serving the chief of province. These latter bureaus --the "headquarters agencies" of the chief of province--were:

	No. of employees
Rural Accounting	4
Accounting Bureau	11
Secretariat	17
General Administration	6
Economic Affairs	4
Social Affairs	2
	44

These were the agencies that, along with the Tax Service, were indicated to the writer as under the full control of the chief of province.[11]

[11]Not included in this listing was the sub-office of the Treasury Service located in an adjoining province. The Long An Chief was anticipating having his own Treasury as soon as proper housing was ready. Also omitted was the provincial branch of the postal, telegraph, and telephone service. For the Western reader there is probably no agency that so clearly reflects the limited scope of at least some governmental services: the entire postal work force for the whole province of 400,000 population consisted of 13 persons, including the six district clerks-- "postal station assistants." No transportation was furnished for the district agents who came usually daily to the provincial station by his privately owned bicycle. The government did, however, pay for repairs. Mail from the districts went on down to the villages by district or village messengers.

It would be a great injustice to suggest that the following sketch includes all of the services provided by the various agencies in Long An province or an adequate description of those mentioned. However, such a sketch should help to enrich this introduction; it follows the sequence of agencies listed on a preceding page.[12]

Four agencies at the provincial level were concerned with security, law, and order: the Civil Guard, Security, Police, and Gendarmerie. To be sure, while having a broad common interest in the preservation of peace, each had its own separate character. In physical appearance the Civil Guard and the Gendarmerie closely resembled regular army force, while at the other extreme Security personnel were in ordinary civilian garb.

As stated in the Governmental Manual, the Civil Guard was responsible for public order and security, for the supervision of law enforcement, and for the pacification of the national territory.[13] Accepted as a security matter, no attempt was made to seek information as to the disposition and size of the Civil Guard in Long An Province. In general, however, it can be said that each guard company was supposed to maintain three or four posts in each district and to maintain supervision over the Self-Guard units at the district level. As viewed by a Civil Guard officer in Long An, the basic distinction between the Civil Guard and the Self-Guard was that the members of the latter group were supposed to be inhabitants of the village in which the unit was located and were recruited by the civil administration. In contrast the Civil Guard was a semi-military force and served throughout the nation.

While the Civil Guard was an agency of the Executive Office of the President, the Gendarmerie was part of the National Defense Department; in other words the Gendarmarie was closely related to the regular army. Members of this unit distinguished themselves from other military by wearing a colorful, red beret. According to the Long An agency, within the Province there were actually three separate Gendarmerie

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[12]Most of this information was based on interviews with heads of the various agencies. Since shortly afterwards the writer obtained some field reports on Long An province made by USOM-Viet-Nam, some additions and modifications were made.

[13]National Institute of Administration, Viet-Nam Government Organization Manual, 1957-58, p. 77.

units, each having its own area of administration.[14] An American can best understand the function of this agency if he would view it as a combination of the military police and state police, the latter being limited largely to the smaller communities, except in times of emergency when it might be authorized to assume complete jurisdiction over all enforcement agencies in order to assure coordination of efforts. The Gendarmerie viewed itself as being responsible to its own hierarchy within the Defense Department and to the Courts, but it also would carry out orders of civil authorities, namely, the chief of province. It contended that no other enforcement agency was competent, legally speaking, to conduct criminal investigations in the rural areas, a function performed in the major communities by the police. Its power extended to the arrest of village councillors against whom complaints had been registered for such activities as abuse of power and violations of laws. It was authorized to demand assistance from village police councillors in the execution of its work. Rural residents, themselves, could contact directly the Gendarmerie rather than go through any civilian channels, such as a contact to the canton and district chiefs.[15] Highway law enforcement including the investigation of accidents also was a function of the Gendarmerie. To conduct its various programs, the Gendarmerie in the chief town of Long An Province consisted of seven employees, including clerical staff. For transportation it had one jeep, which, the writer was told, was oftentimes in need of repair.

The Security personnel were the plain-clothes men of the police forces. Although in principle their jurisdiction included general police activities, the chief of the Long An

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[14]This explanation is based largely on a typewritten statement offered the writer when he first visited the agency. The paper was prepared since the agency had been under evaluation as to its operations and relationships to other enforcement agencies. Complete elimination of this agency has been recommended by the Police Division of the Michigan State University Advisory Group. For a discussion of its recommendation as well as for an overall view of the police organization in Viet-Nam. See "Report on the Police of Viet-Nam", Michigan State University Viet-Nam Advisory Group, 1959 (2d ed.).

[15]The interviewee stated that villagers sometimes would come out to the road in order to talk with the gendarmarie out of sight of village officials and their neighbors.

agency viewed his work as being primarily and largely in the field of political security. The internal administrative pattern differed somewhat even though one force existed for the entire province: in the chief town, the agency itself administered the security program while in the district towns, the district chief was the administrator in charge of the security personnel assigned to his district. The entire force consisted of about 70 members. And for all its affairs, it had three jeeps, two of which, the interviewee stressed, were in "bad shape," being in use about 10 days for each month. Its work was further handicapped by the lack of any telephone network with the district offices. In connection with its various interests, the agency attempted to visit every village at least once a month and to keep the village police councillors informed of activities throughout the province.

Apart from the Gendarmerie, the Municipal Police could be viewed as the only professionally trained, general security and law enforcement agency. Its members, however, did not go down beyond the district town level. With a staff of some 80 members in the chief town and seven to fifteen in each district town, the police force assumed three major responsibilities: peace and order, sanitation of the market, and collection of various market and excise taxes--this function being called "economic control." It did not assume responsibility for the jail in the province which was, instead, apparently under the direct supervision of the province chief. Like the Security forces, the Municipal Police in the districts operated under the direction of the district chief while general administrative matters, such as personnel records, were maintained in the provincial offices.

All provincial health services were within one agency headed by a part-time administrator, a doctor who also conducted a private practice. In his view the major health services of the Province were the 40 bed general hospital and a 12 bed maternity located in the province town; however, he added, each district also possessed an infirmary and a maternity ward. The agency assumed responsibility for supervising the village first aid dispensaries. In the opinion of the doctor the agency possessed about only one-fifth of the equipment needed for a minimum health service. As an example, it possessed only two jeeps for servicing the entire province, one being frequently in need of repair. This transportation also was used for carrying patients to hospitals in Saigon. In a fairly typical month, January, 1958, the provincial hospital treated slightly over 500 patients for the following causes:

	Patients		Patients
Wounds	96	Intestinal parasites	29
Skin diseases	72	Genito-urinary	28
Avitaminosis	47	Chronic brochitis	20
Dysentery	39	Tuberculosis	17
Whooping cough	36	Eye inflammation	10
Respiratory infection	36	Diseases of gum and teeth	15
Nervous system	35	Grippe	12

The entire provincial technical staff consisted of 1 physician, 24 nurses, seven assistant nurses, 13 midwives, 15 rural midwives (the distinction not being clarified), and, the doctor added, the 96 first aid agents who were village residents with little or no training, although plans were being formulated for a major training program. The administrative staff consisted of two typists and one messenger.

Four separate agencies--widely scattered throughout the province town--dealt with the broad and popular field of agriculture. These were the Veterinary Service, Agricultural Extension Service, Agriculture and Rice Service, and the Land Registration and Agrarian Reform Service. Size of their staffs ranged from four in the Veterinary to 12 in the Agrarian Reform Services.

The Veterinarian Service, in addition to performing the customary services of providing medical care for domesticated animals, administered and supervised the special foreign-aid program of animal and fowl distribution, operated a chicken farm for breeding purposes, and inspected animal food products in the markets. The agency contained one professionally trained veterinarian and three assistants.[16] With such a

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[16]Although no plan had been made to search systematically for indications of the impact of American aid or for attitudes about the aid programs, the writer at least as a footnote desires to record his impressions at this time. Among the provincial administrators the only one who spoke enthusiastically about the contribution of American aid was this veterinarian--the availability of medical supplies, he said, had brought about a complete change in the attitude of the farmers toward his service, for now he was able to be an important service to them. Now they no longer hesitated to call upon him for help for they had seen the effective results of his work. As he said this he was pointing to the new equipment facilitating his work.

limited staff, the veterinarian depended considerably on general administrative service lines and on office calls. When plans were being made to vacinate buffaloes, for example, he would notify the district chiefs to have village councils assemble the animals. Office treatment was usually dependent upon descriptions of the symptons rather than on an examination of the animal. Field calls were usually limited to extremely serious cases and those indicating the possibility of an epidemic. In distributing foreign-aid animals, he might take them directly to farmers, or in case of a large number, he would ask the village councils to assist in making the distribution.

Similar to the agricultural extension service found in the United States, the Long An Service contained specialists in rural club activities--the equivalent of 4-H clubs--and in home economics as well as an agricultural agent who was in charge. The total staff included six members: the chief, three club agents, and two home economic specialists. Transportation for covering the entire province consisted of a Land-Rover and three motorbikes. The service was housed in an extremely modern, newly constructed building located on the edge of the chief town. The service attempted to work directly with villagers as well as with village councils. As one of the club agents explained, its work with communities was seen in three steps with the agency providing the technical assistance and the village council the prestige: (1) the mutual analysis of community needs; (2) the development of the plan for "mobilizing" the cooperation of the people; and (3) the working relationship between the village council and the agency. In its two and one half years, it had established 20 4-h clubs. No data were given as to other community projects.

With a staff of six, the Agriculture and Rice Service appeared most interested in its research and experimental activities. It maintained an experimental center for chemical fertilizers and another for improving rice seeds. It, however, also provided various services to the individual farmer largely of an advisory character such as related to the protection of crops against insects, purchase of water pumps for irrigation and the obtaining of loans from national credit agencies. Close contact was maintained with village councils, the chief explained, through the monthly reports on economic activities submitted to his office.[17] For transportation to

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[17]For this study no attempt was made to determine the extent of interagency committees. This particular agency head mentioned that he participated in four: Price Committee for Expropriated Lands; Agricultural Credit Committee; Crop Protection Committee; and Productivity Committee for Expropriated Lands.

the two experimental centers, the more distant being 15 kilometers from the agency headquarters, and for other travels, the entire staff depended on one motor scooter, plus other transportation obtained on a trip basis from the provincial headquarters.

The Land Registration and Agrarian Reform Service was centering its interest on three activities: the preparation of land descriptions requested by land owners; the Agrarian Reform program; and the preparation of lists of landowners for use by the Tax Service. Seven of the 12 members were in the Agrarian Reform program, spending most of their time in the villages, the interviewee stated.

The Public Works Service conducted various programs. Its major function was to construct and maintain the roads and bridges throughout the province. All roads of a general interest were included in its operations, whether they were known as national, interprovincial, provincial or communal roads. It had responsibility for about 30 kilometers of hard-surfaced road, 170 kilometers of interprovincial and provincial roads, and 300 kilometers of village roads and streets. Other activities included the control of traffic on the waterways; the issuance of building permits for construction of factories in which machines were to be used; the supplying of electricity and water; and the giving of engineering assistance to communities upon request. All of these activities were performed with a corps of 20 employees and a work crew varying from 100 to 200.

The Reconstruction Service, housed with the Public Works, centered its attention of the construction of public buildings. This was a large program since many additions were being made to the provincial headquarters for the various services. The construction work was done by a staff of two employees and some 25 to 30 temporary workers and some additional help obtained from the Public Works Service. The staff also served as a reviewing agency for requests submitted by the villages for no village public buildings could be constructed without its approval.

The Educational Service in the province was concerned only with primary education; higher education was administered, the interviewee explained, on the basis of a "direct line" between the school director and offices in the central (perhaps regional) administration. All told the province contained 130 public elementary schools manned by a total of 768 teachers and directors, administered at the provincial level by 8 administrators, all of whom were, in a technical sense, teachers because of belonging to that cadre. Seven private elementary schools were also under the supervision of this

service. Teachers for the public schools were chosen either by the central government or by the provincial service and chief of province: the more permanent being controlled by the central government.

The two separate services of Youth and Sports and of Information were responsible to the same central agency, the Department of Information and Youth, which was known prior to December, 1955, as the Department of Information and Psychological Warfare. Both agencies were designed to work closely with the public in order to organize recreational activities and to disseminate information and propaganda. The Youth and Sports Service had a staff of 14 and the Information Service, 12. Both depended upon field agents in the district offices. The Information Service subdivided its activities into four sections: administration; psychological warfare (responsible for studying the "general situation" and preparing topics for discussion by political study groups), information and press, and official ceremonies and mobile operations (the latter included the conduct of the mobile movie program).

The Civic Action group was truly mobile--the writer never saw any member in the provincial building in which it was headquartered. In accordance with their objective, the members were continually traveling throughout the province in order to give direct assistance to various district and village officials concerned with community development projects. Like the Civil Guard, The Civic Action at the national level enjoyed being part of the Executive Offices.

The nine members of the Tax Agency were performing two major tasks: supervision of the property tax collection being made by the village finance officers and collection of various indirect taxes, such as on products made by small industries and handicraft shops. Such taxes were collected on basis of reports submitted to the office by the manager or owner of the shop. In addition the agency also collected the excise taxes on goods brought into the province for sale. Its supervision of village tax collections included review of the proposed tax collections as well as of the status of collections.[18]

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[18]Various studies have already been made of the taxes administered by provinces in the southern region of Viet-Nam, including: David . Cole and Bui Quang Da "Summary of Village Finances in the Southern Region of Vietnam," Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group, Saigon, October, 1957, (mimeo.) and David C. Cole, "Report on Taxation in the Provinces of South Vietnam," _____, November, 1956 (mimeo.). Also in process are a series of studies under the direction of Milton C. Taylor, also of the Michigan State University group, regarding income, real property, business licenses, and other major taxes.

Housed in one large office were the various headquarters bureaus of the province: the Secretariat, General Administration, Accounting, Rural Accounting, Economic Affairs, and Social Affairs. Of these only the last three merit some explanation for this study.

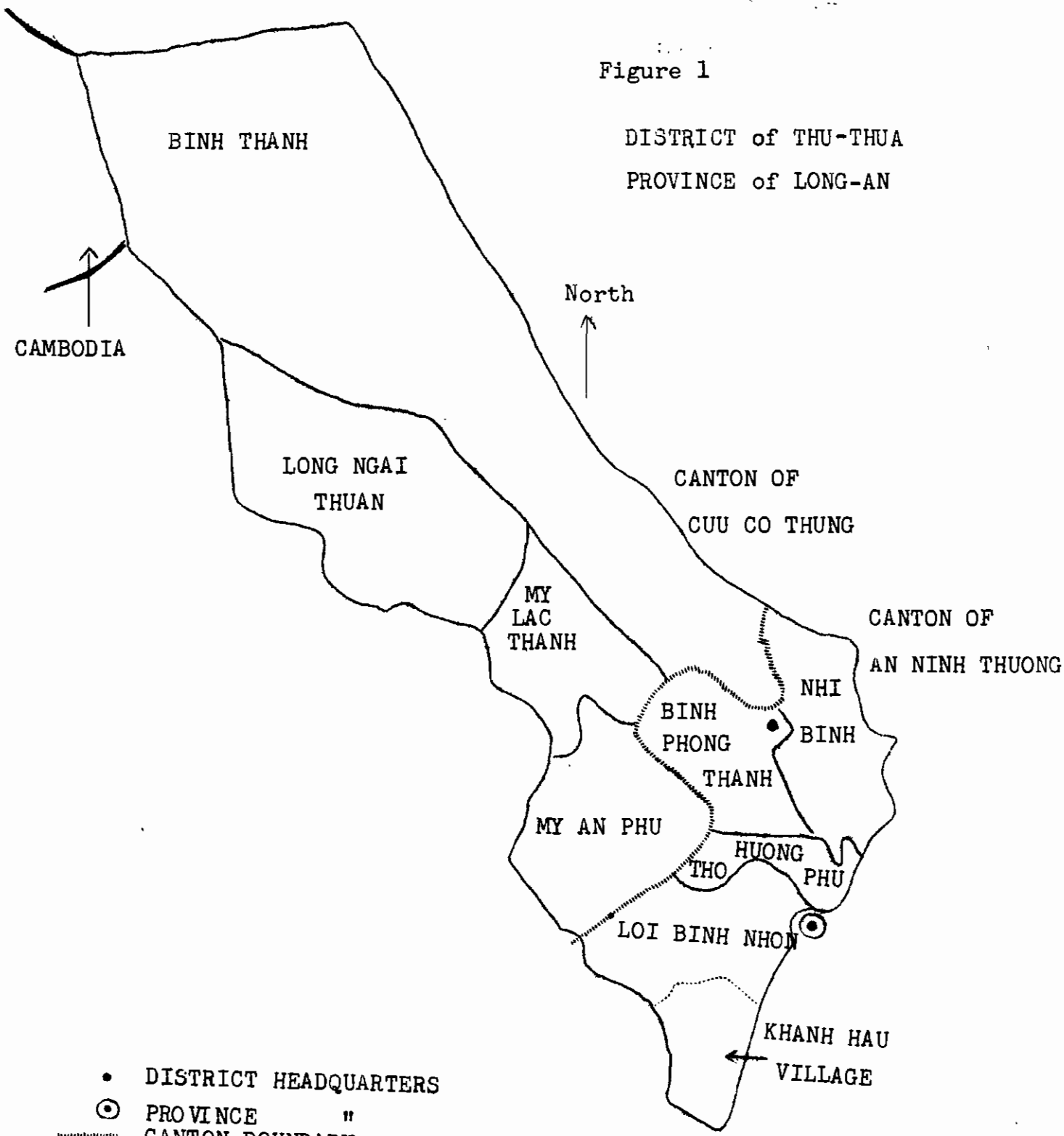
The Rural Accounting Bureau of four members supervised the financial affairs of the 101 villages; however, its work seemed limited largely to the mechanics rather than to an evaluation of proposals as such. It examined the proposed budgets for completeness and accuracy before returning them to the villages for final drafting and then to the chief of province for approval. It recorded allocation of funds from the mutual assistance fund as well as the authorizations granted by the chief of province for intervillage loans.

One staff officer was serving temporarily in charge of both the Social and Economics Bureaus. In the economic field he viewed his major duty as "studying and solving" economic problems. His problem frame of reference, as reflected by the subjects he selected for the discussion, centered on the administration of agricultural credit loans, although the one interview was not sufficient, of course, to portray his entire scope of interest. Also mentioned were the three governmental rice cooperatives and the six private cooperatives: dye, textiles, weaving and handicraft, and three rice, including one in Khanh Hậu village. In the field of social affairs, the Bureau administered financial aid for the blind, the poor, the orphans, "old men" and victims of natural disaster. The customary amount of assistance ranged from 100 to 500 piasters per month and up to 1,000 piasters for any major disaster. A total of 40,000 piasters of social assistance was a typical amount for one month. The public received this service through the district offices except for the inhabitants of the province town who could come directly to the provincial bureau.

The District of Thu Thua

The District of Thu Thua, shown in the following map, was one of seven districts in the province. Measuring about 25 kilometers in length and eight to 12 kilometers in width, it contained roughly about 300 square kilometers. In 1957 its population was estimated at 42,000. In comparison with the other districts it ranked seventh or last in area and sixth in population. Much of its western sector was non-productive, being either marsh or abandoned land. Plans already in the hands of central governmental administrators for reopening one major canal were viewed as a key to reducing considerably

Figure 1



June, 1958

the unproductiveness of that area. The district headquarters, located in the largest community, Binh Phong Thanh, was 15 kilometers from the provincial offices and was connected by two all-weather, graveled roads to the national highway leading from Saigon to the provincial chief town.

The district headquarters buildings were located on the edge of the community in what appeared to be a former military compound. Administrative offices were divided between a relatively small building measuring some 10 meters square and part of the residence of the district chief, a few steps away. A long narrow military barracks completed the layout which was capped at the rear by a wide, river-like canal and at the front by a well-guarded entrance reenforced with a barbed wire fence.

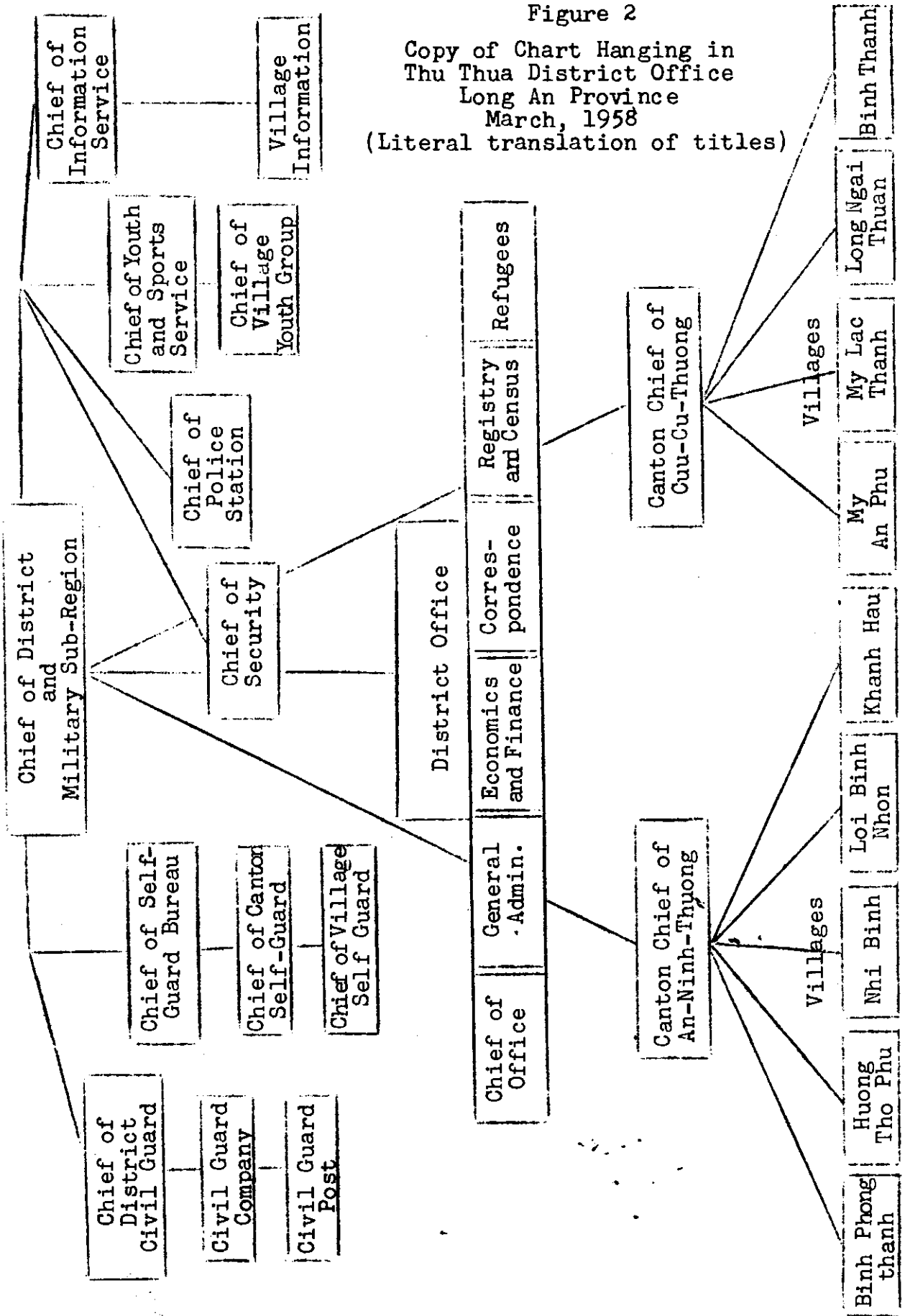
For this district the administrative organization consisted of six offices belonging to the district headquarters and six "field representatives" of the 16 services found at the provincial level in Long An province. On an wall-size organization chart located back of the desk of the district chief all of these were shown as being under his control, that is, the lines of authority ran from the district chief to each of the services and to the others grouped under the "district office bureau." A facsimile of the chart is shown in the following figure.[19] While the staff for the services varied considerably, each of the headquarters offices were manned by one employee, with the exception of the Refugees Bureau which at the time was combined with the Economics and Finance office. Although the size of the Security and Self Guard Service Staffs was not reported, the district chief did describe most other services

	Size of staff
Civil Guard	1 company of 170 officers and enlisted men
Self Guard	(district office supervised about 170 village self guards and two 30 member canton mobile patrols.)
Security	?

[19]One of the first impressions the writer received about local administration in Viet-Nam was an apparent penchant for preparing and displaying organization charts. This was found in northern as well as southern provinces.

Figure 2

Copy of Chart Hanging in
Thu Thua District Office
Long An Province
March, 1958
(Literal translation of titles)



Police	8
Youth and Sport	3
Information	2

It is worth noting the duties for these agencies, as given by the district chief. In the offices of the district headquarters: the bureau of the district chief handled secret orders and official papers; the general administration bureau handled any problems in general administration, including land, agrarian reform, and justice; the economics and finance bureau supervised village taxes, village payrolls, and collected some taxes; the mail bureau recorded incoming and outgoing official mail, and registered certain documents, especially birth certificates; the registry and census bureau issued copies of registered documents and census (or identification) cards; the refugees bureau handled relations with the refugee center in the district. For the national services the description followed closely the functions described at the provincial level. It should be added that the district chief was a young army lieutenant.[20]

The organization chart also indicated the existence of two cantons. However, according to the district chief, their offices were not operating since both canton chiefs had resigned because of old age. As a result, the district chief was working directly with the villages. As the chart showed, five villages were under one canton and four under the other. The geographical grouping is indicated in the preceding map of the district.

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[20]In fact six of the seven district chiefs in Long An Province as well as the chief of province were army officers. The one exception was the chief of the district in which the provincial headquarters was located.

Chapter III

Village Organization

Although in the preceding chapter no attention was given to the historical developments of the nation, before turning to the current pattern of organization in Khanh Hau it is worth tracing some of the more recent changes in village council organization since the village council was still clearly in a period of evolution. In fact, at the time of this study it was waiting for the next major change--since 1956 the government had been keeping village administrative organization in suspension between the pattern designed during the Bao Dai regime and that still to be announced for the Republic of Viet-Nam. As research for this review was being completed it became apparent that the most interesting feature was the efforts of the French during the colonial era to create a village governmental council out of a segment of the traditional, social council and thereby to provide for a feasible working relationship--a bridge so to speak--between the central administration and the villagers, between western concepts of government and rural, traditional Vietnamese society.[1]

This historical review, limited to the twentieth century, had to be based on what was known about the general pattern for not enough data could be obtained about Khanh Hau itself. Villagers could easily enumerate the titles of the pre-war council members and attach some duties; however, information about the earlier origins was too vague. Yet enough was learned to conclude that the pattern in Khanh Hau apparently did follow fairly closely the organizational provisions found in the key statutes. Thus, although the following discussion depends upon the general pattern, it is fair to assume that it describes reasonably well the evolution of village administration in Khanh Hau.

Major Changes in Village Council Organization

The starting point for noting changes in village council organization was not difficult to determine: the year, 1904, stood out like a mountain peak in a flat rice field, since it

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[1]Included as an Annex is the more complete historical review of village organization prepared by Miss Nguyen Xuan Dao, Special Project Officer.

marked the establishment of the first general law about village council organization in the southern provinces. The second landmark chosen for the review was established almost a half-century later, 1953, during the short regime of Bao Dai: and the final, three years later, 1956.

The 1904 Village Council

The 1904 law was based on special study committee report prepared for the Lt. Governor of Cochinchina. This committee had been set up for the expressed purpose of strengthening the position of the village council of notables. The opening address given by the Lt. Governor suggests the frame of reference within which the study committee approached its work:[2]

> The Annamite village is disorganized; this precious institution is menaced. Everywhere the administrators have set up a cry of alarm. The great notables have lost interest in village affairs; when their year of duty has ended, they evade their functions as if it had been a period of servitude.
>
> It is necessary to raise again the prestige of communal functions and to arm the notables with real authority: the right to pronounce the penalties of fines and labor up to a certain point.

In this, the type of solution indicated favored strengthening the traditional council. Earlier in the address another alternative--expanding the use of French administrators--had been cast aside as impractical.

From a reading of the report it became apparent that the study committee devoted considerable effort to acquainting itself with the existing organizations of notables and the needs felt by the Vietnamese themselves. It was interested

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[2]Republique Française, Recherches des Moyens les Plus Propres a Rendre aux Notable Indigenes l'Authorite et le Prestige. Imprimerie Coloniale, Saigon, 1904. The study committee had seven members. Its president was in charge of the direction of the province of Cholon and an inspector of civil service. Other members included two members of the Colonial Council--one Vietnamese and one European; the chief of the province of Bien Hoa; two magistrates; and a secretary.

in the prevailing custom of hierarchy, the age at which the Vietnamese thought a notable should begin serving on the council, and the extent to which the council should enjoy the power to inflict punishment. The following extract from one of its sessions illustrates the realistic spirit with which the committee seemed to have approached its inquiry:

A French civil servant:: I notice that you have placed the "huong chu" at the head of the list as president of the notables. In general it is the "huong ca" who holds that place.

A Vietnamese members: You are right except in the province of Baria where the "huong chu" is ahead of the "huong ca."

President of the study committee: It is precisely a village in the province of Baria that I have chosen because it seemed to me that it was in that province that the tradition was the best preserved.

We might place the "huong ca" at the head... and the "huong chu" as vice-president.

(adopted)

Six months after being established the committee was ready to submit its recommendations. During this period it had held ten to twelve conferences including several in regional areas and had drafted a proposed general law covering the functioning of the village council. Although no copy of the actual adoption plan could be found, one can assume that it closely followed the provisions shown in Figure 3. But before discussing the 1904 changes in council organization some background of a few other provisions will be explained.

One provision concerned the extent to which the village council should be allowed to inflict punishment on villagers. The French had withdrawn almost all of this power prior to 1903 and that withdrawal greatly decreased the prestige of the notables. As one writer pointed out, even though villagers feared the early council because of its power any family was

proud of a son who became a councillor.[3] Thus, during the 1903 hearings a Vietnamese councillor argued for allowing village councils once again to use the rattan whip:

Vietnamese Councillor: I ask that the council (grand notables) be given the rights of repression that they had under domination of the Annamites, that is, the application of the rattan and the fine. The former would be applied to the dans (ordinary citizen) and the latter to the notables.

President: It is useless to speak of re-establishing the rattan. That is an anti-humanitarian measure that you will never attain as long as we remain masters of this country.

I am a little astonished that after 40 years of our presence here you still insist on this point.

Another Vietnamese Councillor: The penalties requested by my colleague are not heavy and they would inspire a salutary fear in the notables and the dans, because they inflict much more shame than any punishment given outside the village. These penalties would be inflicted in view of everybody. The rattan makes them still more ashamed, but I dare not insist after the words of the President.

Another Vietnamese councillor sought the power to inflict punishment for thirteen named violations some of which were directed against specific groups in villages--the dans, the Chinese, and wives of Annamites. It was apparent that these councillors were extremely anxious to increase greatly the authoritarian role of the village councils.

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[3]Marcel Rouilly, La Commune Annamite, Paris, Les Presses Modernes, 1929.

In spite of the requests made by the Vietnamese, the power to whip was not granted, but some limited power to impose days of guard was authorized: the village council could inflict supplementary days of guard on inhabitants ignoring obligations imposed either by custom or by the Administration. Since the days of guard--as well as the corvée required of the villagers--could be bought off at the customary rate, a system of informal fines was actually created.

In addition to this limited power the council was authorized to retain suspected violators long enough to make an investigation and to communicate with the Administration. Also it could detain for 24 hours any villager who had become intoxicated.

Another provision concerned penalties to be inflicted by the French when public properties had been damaged or when some fraud had been uncovered relative to alcohol and opium regulations. It was pointed out during the committee discussion that current policies inflicted extremely severe punishment on the ruling notables. Apparently the French had assessed the ruling members when they found government property damaged. According to one witness before the study committee, on some occasions this assessment had forced notables to sell most of their personal possessions in order to pay the fine. Thus, the proposed law provided that such punishment should be spread more widely -- one-half among the council members, one-quarter among the other notables, and one-quarter among the remaining villagers.

From reading the minutes of these various meetings, it seems fair to make the following observation about the concern of the French in 1903. It appears that by 1903 the French had reached a fairly mature period in their relationships with the villages in Cochinchina. During the 40 preceding years, they had broken into the traditional pattern without much thought or concern as to their impact. But, by 1903 they had come to realize that it was essential to establish some overall plan within which the functioning of the village notables could be more realistically related to their own colonial administration. Underscoring this realization was a provision preserving the traditional organization of notables: in the 1904 proposed law one provision specifically authorized all notables who had not been designated as members of the village council to retain their titles, ranks and preregotives that had been previously granted by the customs of the village.

The results of the French effort to relate village council organization to the traditional pattern are illustrated in Figure 3. The left hand column contains a list, probably

partial, of notables that existed in the southern villages prior to the coming of the French. The central column shows the first formalized council of notables established by the French, that is, the council charged with the administration of government affairs. For six of the 11 council positions, the French adopted both the titles and the duties found in the traditional pattern, although in some cases additional duties were added. The huong ca illustrates both the transfer and the addition. In the traditional council he was usually the dean or chief by virtue of age; in the French designed council he was considered the first notable and given the additional duty of keeping the archives. It can be assumed that the duties of huong-chu remained the same as an advisor to the head of the council. In the 1904 pattern he was assigned the specific duty of inspecting all village services and reporting to the huong ca--in the traditional pattern he was described as an "official advisor," but since for information about the traditional pattern a secondary source was used this might have been an abbreviation of the inspectorial type of duty given by the French. Along with the huong ca and huong chu, similar transfers were made for the huong quan, the huong than, xa truong, and huong hao. For the huong bo, duties were obtained in part, it appears, from a different notable, the thu bon.

For the remaining three positions in the 1904 council, titles were taken from the traditional pattern but the duties were changed. In the 1904 pattern, the huong su, for example, became an advisor on the interpretation of laws and regulations, whereas before this notable served as an official intermediary between the village and the mandarins, and the huong-lao was the advisor. Likewise, the 1904 council adopted the title huong truong but changed the duties from advising to maintaining the village budget, to assisting teachers, and to serving on the executive council. And the huong chanh, formerly an official advisor, in 1904 was made a conciliator of minor disputes, a duty probably also conducted periodically by the cau duong who was the magistrate.

Illustrations, if not a complete list, of notables not assigned are also shown in the final page of Figure 3. Why the French omitted these is apparent: none were concerned with functions related to the central government. The huong le, for example, was charged with serving as president of the ceremonies and rituals; the huong nhac, as chief of the musicians; and the cai dinh, as keeper of the pagoda.

Figure 3

The Similarities Between the First Village "Administrative Council" and the Traditional Council of Notables

The Traditional Council Before 1904	The "Administrative Council" extracted from the Traditional Council.	
	Established in 1904	Changes in 1927
	(Rank)	(+ = duty added; - = duty withdrawn)
Great notables (not necessarily a complete listing)		
Huong Ca: dean by virtue of age Thu Chi: keep archives	(1) Huong Ca: a first notable; presiding officer; keep archives	+ oversee all village services (new duty)a - keep archives (to huong bo)
Huong Chu: serve as official advisor	(2) Huong Chu: a deputy chief; serve as inspector of all village services, reporting to huong ca.	+ serve as treasurer (from huong bo)a - serve as inspector (to huong su)
Huong Su: Serve as official intermediary between village and mandarins	(3) Huong Su: advise on interpretation of laws and regulations	+ to serve as "executive council"a + serve as inspector (from huong chu)
Huong Lac: advisor of the council		+ serve as deputy chief - advise on interpretation of laws and regulations (to executive notables)

Figure 3 (continued)

The Traditional Council Before 1904	The "Administrative Council" Extracted From The Traditional Council	
	Established in 1904	Changes in 1927
Huong Truong: advise on execution of orders from higher authority	(4) Huong Truong: a maintain village budget; assist teachers, serve on "executive council"	- serve on "executive council" (to huong su) - keep village budget (huong bo) + supervise education (new?)
Huong Chanh: serve as official advisor	(5) Huong Chanh: reconcile minor differences between villagers	+ advise the executive notables (new)
Cau Duong: serve as village magistrate	(6) Huong Giao: train young notables; serve as secretary of council	(No Change)
Huong Quan: serve as police chief	(7) Huong Quan: serve as police chief; supervise the communication and transportation system	+ serve as main assistant for the court prosecutor (new)
Thu Bo: serve as treasurer	(8) Huong Bo: maintain village rolls and accounts; to guard the village buildings and materials	+ preserve the archives (from huong ca) + keep village budget (from huong bo)
Huong Than: To be responsible for general administration (with huong hao)	(9) Huong Than: to serve as an executive notable[b], to serve as an intermediary between judicial authorities and the council	(No Change)

Figure 3 (continued)

The Traditional Council Before 1904	The "Administrative Council" Extracted from the Traditional Council	
	Established in 1904	Changes in 1927
Xa Truong: to serve as intermediary between the village and Administration Thu Bo: conservator of tax rolls	(10) Xa Truong: to serve as an executive notable[b], to serve as an intermediary between village and Administration; to maintain village seal; to serve as tax collector for the Administration	(No change)
Huong Hao: to be responsible for general administration (with huong than)	(11) Huong Hao: to serve as an executive notable[b];	+ serve as chief of village police (from huong quan?) + enforce road regulations (from huong quan?) + serve court papers (from huong quan)
	(12) Chanh luc bo: to maintain civil status registers; to call attention to communicable diseases in the village.	

[a]To serve as an "executive council" notable with major duty of supervising other notables. In 1927 the duties were enumerated as follows: to supervise other councillors; to administer village budget; to supervise receipts and disbursements; and to settle minor infractions.

[b]Duties of the three executive notables were to be responsible for order and security, and for the implementation of decisions from the higher authorities and from the courts.

Figure 3 (continued)

Great notables whose duties were not transferred to the 1904 council and therefore presumably remained part of the traditional group:

Huong Nhut:	serve as first notable
Huong Nhi:	serve as second notable
Huong Le:	serve as president of ceremonies and rituelles
Huong Nhac:	serve as chief of musicians
Huong Am:	serve as organizer of public fetes and banquets
Huong Van:	serve as composer of sentences in the mood of the guardian spirit of the village
Thu Khoan:	to be in charge of farming, and to guard the public rice fields
Cai Dinh:	to be in charge of guarding and maintaining the pagoda.

In addition there were three classes of minor notables:

a: the auxiliaries for the major notables

b: the auxiliaries for the Xa Truong which included the hamlet chiefs

c: village secretaries. Many of these became "additional employees" under the French plans of 1904 +

Sources: Vu Quoc Thong, "La decentralisation administrative au Viet-Nam," Presses Universitaries du Viet-Nam, 1952, Hanoi, pp. 38-39, and 100. Arrete Concernant la Reforme Communale en Cochinchine, 30 October 1927, Art. 7.

Modifications Made in 1927

Unfortunately there does not seem to be available in Viet-Nam any satisfactory analysis of the results obtained with the 1904 plan.[4] Perhaps it is significant that the plan with some minor changes made in 1927 lasted until the early years of World War II. But how it affected village life could not be determined by the writer.

Probably the method of recruitment was the most significant change made by the study commission on village reform in 1927. In essence the change broadened the base of personnel eligible for membership in the council and made the system of promotions more flexible. (The significance of this is explained later on as it relates to the trend in central control over village councils.)

The other changes, more or less of a minor degree, can be divided into three types: the establishment of new positions; the assignment of additional or more fully specified duties; and some transfers of duties.

As shown in the right hand column of Figure 3, a twelfth position was established, the chan-luc-bo, which was charged with maintaining the civil status or vital statistics registers and also of functioning, in effect, as a public health officer. Related to the latter function was the specifically stated duty of calling attention of the villagers to any communicable diseases spreading throughout the village. This position existed prior to 1927 but it was not considered as part of the village administrative council.

What might be called "new" duties but which might have been largely an amplification of existing duties were assigned to three of the 11 notables. The huong ca was given the specific duty of overseeing all village services. Since he was already the chief of the council it is likely that he had been assuming some responsibility for overseeing the various activities; hence specifying this as a duty might have been done in order to clarify his role and in general to encourage him to exercise more influence. Likewise such a provision, from the viewpoint of higher authorities, facilitated pinpointing responsibility for local affairs.

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[4] According to the Chief of the National Library, all pertinent reports and documents were transferred from Hanoi to the archives in Paris.

While before the huong-truong was instructed to assist the teachers in the community, by the 1927 act he was also ordered to function as their supervisor. As in the case of the huong ca, this might be interpreted as an attempt to strengthen the pattern of administration, by specifying more clearly the duties and by pinpointing responsibility.

How to interpret the changes made in the role of the huong chanh remains undetermined. Already responsible for functioning as a judge over minor civil matters, he was given the unrelated function of advising and even supervising the group of three executive notables. Thus, the French had given not only the huong ca but also the hanh chanh more "executive" responsibility for the actions of the other council members.

Apart from the assignment of "new" duties, various transfers were made. Insofar as it could be determined, no special significance can be attached to these changes. They probably were made in view of minor dissatisfactions found in the 1904 plan. For example it was obviously a logical step to transfer the keeping of the archives from the huong ca to the huong bo who was already maintaining records. Making the huong su the third "executive notable" in place of the huong truong likewise appeared as a logical step in that, as it will be discussed later, he held a higher position in the hierarchy, being ranked third among the 11 notables. Also by this move, a continuum of participating in the function of interpreting laws and regulations was maintained even though this function was transferred to the three-member group of "executive notables." Transferring the keeping of the village budget to the huong bo undoubtedly helped to eliminate questions about division of duties since already the huong bo was maintaining the village accounts, which presumably involved financial affairs.

The 1927 Council -- An Analysis of Its Functions

Since in 1927 only a few changes were actually made, either the 1927 or the earlier council could be viewed as having continued in operation for almost a period of 40 years, that is, from 1904 to 1944. Thus, for purposes of broadening this perspective about village council history, "the" council under the French can be depicted as a council of 12 villages notables, assisted by a varying number of junior councils and clerks, whose recruitment as well as their jobs were carefully prescribed by the French administration.

A council of 12 members is an exceedingly large council, in terms of the needs for governmental services existing in

rural areas in Viet-Nam or elsewhere. It is obvious that many of the assigned duties as shown in Figure 3 would not require much effort or time. For example, maintaining the village archives or keeping the village seal certainly could not have demanded more than a few hours of work each month. Thus, assuming that the French were aware of this, it is fair to say that they were not intending to design a council in which most members would be heavily burdened with village affairs. And the provisions regarding allowances supports this view--payments for services were to be based on the amount of time devoted to public service.

On the basis of the functional analysis shown in Figure 4, it is evident that a great proportion of the duties assigned to the 12 members were concerned with "internal affairs" of the council rather than with community services as such. In other words many of the 12 councillors were more in the class of "staff" and "housekeeping" operations than "line" administration. In short, the typical village council was overstaffed with persons more involved with "council affairs" than "village affairs." This top-heavy bureaucracy is well illustrated in Figure 4 by the duties that could be classified as "Internal Operations of Council," such as supervising other members, safeguarding records, record keeping and other (coordinating, advising, inspecting, budgeting and training--the terms employed by the French). Although the tabulation of "X's" does not accurately depict the workload, yet it helps to note the extent to which the French specified internal duties for council members.

Whether or not the French were obligingly carrying forward a pattern of existing organization, they further complicated the council arrangement, it would seem, by establishing the two sub-groups of "executive council" and executive notables. With the assignment of such duties as assuming responsibility for the public order, security, and health of the village and for the execution of laws and regulations and for the supervision of other councillors these two sub-groups must have become the "hard core" of village administration organization. Thus, if the entire group of notables were to be organized according to their types of responsibilities, these two sub-groups would have to be placed at the top of the organizational chart, indicating their managerial responsibilities for the other notables. Perhaps in practice such an arrangement because of the size of the council actually helped to clarify lines of administration.

Figure 4

Village Council Organization in Cochinchina - 1927: Analysis of Duties

Title of Councillor's Position	Internal Operations of Council				General Village Supervision	Functions Involving Contact With Village Residents				
	Supervising	Safeguarding	Recording	Other[d]		Law	Justice	Health	Property Protection	Tax Collection
(Individual positions)										
A. Huong-ca	X				X					
B. Huong-chu	(X)[a]		X		(X)[a]					
C. Huong-su	(X)[a]				(X)[a]X					
D. Huong-Truong	X			X						
E. Huong-Chanh	X			X			X			
F. Huong-gia			X	X						
G. Huong-quan[b]						X	X		X	
H. Huong-bo		X	XX							
I. Huong-than				X						
J. Xa-truong		X	X							X
K. Huong-hao						XX	X			
L. Chanh-luc-bo			X					X		
M. "Executive Council"	X			XX			X			
N. Executive Notables[c]			X	XXXX	XX	X			X	X

a - substitute for the Huong-ca
b - assisted by huong-than, cai-tuan, cai-thi, cai-thon, trum, and truong
c - assisted by the pho-xa, pho-ly, ly-truong, bien-lai, cai-thon, the trum, and the truong
d - includes such actions as coordinating, advising, inspecting, budgeting, and training

Source: Arrete Concernant la Reforme Communale en Cochinchine, 30 October 1927, Article 7.

The 1953 Council

In studies of village council development in Viet-Nam there is a large gap beginning about 1944 and extending to almost 1953, which was a period of much change and turbulence. As a result it is difficult to describe the actual characteristics of council organization throughout the southern provinces. A resumé can be offered, however, of the major legal changes in council organization, which reflect the thinking of the governmental authorities, although the extent to which they were actually implemented could not be judged.

In 1946 under the Viet Minh, a plan was established for replacing the traditional council by two bodies--a popularly elected council varying from 15 to 25 members and a governing body of seven members drawn from the former. Since the provision was made for a popular election, this presumably represented a complete break from the traditional pattern, a complete break, at least, as to the legal principle. The plan was not put into full operation, however, since French control was re-established later on in the same year.

From 1946 to 1949 the essence of the village council plan was a provision for popular elections and an eight member council divided into two administrative committees (an extension of the "executive council" and executive notables of the 1926 council?). In 1949 this was replaced by a centrally appointed council having from six to eight members. And this lasted until 1953, when under Bao Dai the provisions for a popularly elected council were once again established.

The outstanding change during this period was the complete break made from the traditional council of notables. While the French from 1904 onward had recognized and accepted the close relationship between the notability and the council, the Viet Minh eliminated this as a factor in the selection of council members. Popular election, rather than limited selection, became the predominating theme in 1946. And it lasted first for three years; and then it took hold again four years later, in 1953. Unfortunately, little is known about actual practices during this period. In spite of popular election and change in council organization, much if not most of the spirit of the traditional pattern probably continued.

It is at this point that some observations should be made about the changes in the selection of council members during the earlier years for they will enrich the background against which the pattern of organization designed under the Bao Dai regime in 1953 will be examined.

It was the conclusion of Miss Nguyen Xuan Dao in her study of historical development that changes in the pattern of selection of village council members from 1904 onward followed the same general theme--increasing central control at the expense of local control.[5] This tendency could be noted in three aspects of the selection system, she contended.

Under the 1904 act the French left the matter of basic qualifications mostly to the villagers themselves. Although the act stated that notables were to be chosen from among the landowners and the wealthy, this probably did not conflict with the traditional pattern of notability. The only other legal requirement was that one needed to know how to read and write in order to enter the membership of the governing council. Generally village customs dictated that, in order to become a member of the notability, the main prerequisite was to offer a banquet for the villagers, a step requiring some indication of wealth. And in the rural villages wealth was probably closely related to landownership.

Increase in central control was achieved in 1927, according to Miss Dao, by an additional provision stipulating, in effect, that certain persons could qualify even though they had not entered this elite circle. These were Vietnamese who had been administrators in the colonial government or members of the military. They were eligible for the council if they had held a rank of sergeant or higher. Such a provision, she suggested, made available personnel who were more friendly or sympathetic to the French authorities.

The second aspect in 1904--the method of selection of members of the governing council--was left entirely to the village with the exception that in case of disputes the final decision would be subject to the judgment of the chief of province. But in 1927 additional control was given the central government by requiring central approval of all selections.

And the third - in 1904 a closed system of promotions was established, that is, promotions were made from within the council. One could not become a high ranking member without first having served in all lower positions. One entered the council at the age of 24 in the position of huong hao. After one year, he could move upward to the next in which, as in all future positions, he must remain for a minimum of two years. However, this closed system was fractured in 1927 by a provision exempting the former administrators and veterans.

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[5]See "Summary" of her study.

It should be recognized, of course, that any generalization about the overall pattern of change in central vis a vis local control would require more knowledge than that with which Miss Dao made her judgments as interesting as they may be--to fully appreciate the changes in the balance of controls the developments in operational as well as organizational relationships would have to be evaluated. In the opinion of the writer, a more interesting trend was the gradual separation of the village council from the notability. Some of the ways in which this was started have already been noted, especially the amendment in 1927 allowing villagers other than those already recognized as notables to enter village council service and furthermore to enter on a more flexible basis. (But again for this study as for Miss Dao's there is a shortcoming in that the actual impact this provision actually had on the various villages is not known).

The war years brought forth the final separation. Popularly elected councils were created, which eliminated all official regulations restricting membership to the elite group. And as will be seen, the 1953 council established under Bao Dai made no attempt to return to the former, traditional pattern. Instead it represented a forward movement in keeping with the concept of a more egalitarian basis that had its legal basis first established in 1946.

The first article, in fact, the first sentence, of the 1953 decree proclaims universal suffrage as the basis of the new village council--the Vietnamese village was to be ruled by a village council elected by universal suffrage.[6] And from that the article went on to a description of the council members, election procedure, powers of review by higher authorities, and related matters. Altogether the one decree fairly well covered the role of the council in village affairs.

The following analysis of the 1953 village council will be based on the data presented in Figure 5. Stress will be placed on the contrasts and similarities with the traditional council.

Unlike the 1927 council, the 1953 council was given a fairly flexible organization arrangement. For all villages, a minimum of three members was established. Additional

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[6]Decret 34-NV du 19 Mars 1953 "Fixant le Statut de la Commune Vietnamienne et Les Attributions Du Conseil Communal," Textes Organiques Du Viet-Nam, Tome I, 1953, p. 583.

Figure 5

Village Council Organization in Viet-Nam
1953

Membership	Duties
(Mandatory positions)	
A. Chu-tich	1. to represent the village 2. to defend the interests of the village 3. to direct and coordinate village services 4. to convoke the council 5. to preside and direct the debates of the council 6. to sign orders for receipts and expenditures 7. to settle minor civil disputes "... a l'amiable et sous forme de transactions".
B. Pho Chu-tich	1. to substitute for the chu-tich 2. to serve as village treasurer.
C. Tong Tho-ky	1. to maintain minutes and the archives 2. to study problems of general administration 3. to prepare correspondence for the signature of the president
(Optional positions but duties are mandatory. A maximum of nine optional positions was allowed.)	
D. Uy-vien giao-duc	1. to attend to activities in education, youth, and sports.
E. Uy-vien y-te	1. to attend to questions concerned with public health, welfare, and charities

Figure 5 (cont'd)

Village Council Organization in Viet-Nam
1953

Membership	Duties
F. Uy-vien ho-tich[a]	1. to maintain the vital statistics registers
G. Uy-vien canh-sat[b]	1. to serve as chief of the administrative and judicial police 2. to serve as the principal auxiliary for the state prosecutor 3. to maintain peace and security 4. to serve court papers.
H. Uy-vien tai-chanh and Uy-vien thue-vu	1. to take charge of financial affairs and village property 2. to collect the taxes.
I. Uy-vien cong-chinh, Uy-vien kinh-te, and Uy-vien canh-nong	1. to be acquainted especially with affairs relative to public works, commerce, industry, handicraft, breeding, and the protection of livestock and agriculture

[a]Assistants were authorized.

[b]Aided by auxiliaries and the communal guard

Source: Decret 34-NV, 19 March 1953, Textes Organique Du Viet-Nam, Tome I, 1953, pp. 583-584.

members, not to exceed nine, could be added by the province chief. Although specific duties were established for the three, the actual distribution for the additional members was left to the councillors themselves. Many of the duties listed in the decree were similar to those found in the earlier legislation; however, the 1953 organization simplified the internal organization of the council by eliminating the complex of subgroups and the duties providing for one member to supervise another or to be advising another. Along with this the 1953 plan seemed to have greatly strengthened the position of the chief of the council, the chu-tich. As shown in Figure 5 the chief was given various executive and financial controls as well as the responsibility for serving as a civil judge, that is, as the councillor endowed with the authority to settle minor disputes arising between two or more villagers.

Title changes themselves partially symbolize the separation from the traditional notability as such. Although the title of the village council still contained a reference to notables, the titles of positions were considerably altered. For example, the huong-ca or "communal head" became chu-tich or president; in general the change was marked by the substitution of the prefix "uy-vien" or commissioner for "huong" meaning communal.

The intent of the 1953 law relative to the earlier custom of promotion within the ranks might well be left as a matter of speculation. What the law did was to allow the council members themselves to determine the assignment of positions after the villagers had elected the proper number. Under the temporary chairmanship of the most aged member, the council was to meet within fifteen days in order to determine its internal organization. Although no provision was inserted for reviewing this organization meeting, minutes were to be kept and forwarded in triplicate, going to the chief of canton, district chief, and province chief.

Another feature distinguishing this council from its pre-World War II predecessor was the emphasis placed in the law relative to the functioning of the members as part of a group rather than merely as individual village officials. Various provisions in the 1953 law, but not in the earlier laws, discussed the duties of the whole council and, in fact, assigned some duties to the council itself rather than to specific members. For example, under the broad authorization stating that the village council is responsible for the administration of the village services and for the management of business affairs, the law prescribed that the council would deliberate within the framework of existing laws and regulations such matters as the budget of the village, the regulations regarding

collection of village revenues, the handling of village property, the opening of streets and public places, and judicial actions. While the 1953 act did not endow the council with any type of rule-making power as such, in general it seemed to encourage a movement in that direction.

With the elimination of the caste-like traditional council, it is difficult to suggest what characteristics the two councils might still have held in common. Certainly the differences seemed to be more outstanding. Whether by coincidence--the writer thinks not--it is interesting to note that the 1953 law provided for the same number of members although, as noted, the actual number could fall short of the maximum of 12, depending upon the decision of the province chief. Even in the filling of vacancies the law removed all authority from any "in-group" such as the notables by requiring a partial election to fill vacant seats once the number had amounted to one-third of the total membership; and if the number got as high as one-half, a completely new council had to be elected.

There is one feature of the law that does carry at least a hint of the former council of notables: the 1953 law, like the 1927 law, contained no provision about the term of office. This was surprising especially in view of the general pattern of a three-year term established at the same time for municipalities and the Saigon prefecture. Why no term was established remains unexplained.

The 1956 Council

The actions of the central government in June, 1956, bring this review to the current period. At that time with the use of a minor legal form--a circular letter--the Secretary of State at the Presidency authorized the province chiefs to replace the elective councils with appointive councils. This substitution was unofficially recognized as a response to the problem of political security facing the government.

In addition to changing the method of selection the government reduced the size of the council to three members but provided that larger communities could be granted two additional members making the actual maximum a council of five: a chairman, vice-chairman, police commissioner, and two supplementaries for finance and administrative affairs. At first, this was called an administrative committee, but by an action in November, 1956, the title was changed to village council. (One can only speculate as to the rationale for this change in nomenclature--it may have been to eliminate

any confusion with an earlier form established during the Viet-Minh Period.) It was this council that existed in Khanh Hau.

The Village of Khanh Hau

As indicated in the preceding map of Thu Thua district the Village of Khanh Hau was located relatively near the province town, a distance in fact of some five kilometers from the village hall to the provincial headquarters. The village was closer to the provincial than to the district seat. In the province the village was centrally located on the long axis but at the far side--from Saigon as well as from the province town--on the short axis. The southern boundary of the village was a stream which also served as a provincial boundary.

General Characteristics

Although data were not obtained for all 101 villages in Long An Province (The Province Chief deemed population data an item that should be obtained from the central government.) in comparison with the other villages Khanh Hau was probably one of the smallest, both as to population and area. Statistical comparisons have only limited value in view of the lack of certainty as to the accuracy of some data; however, they tend to support this view. For example, while the average population per village amounted to 4,300, Khanh Hau had a population of about 3,000. More recently an increase to 3,200 was accredited Khanh Hau after a family census had been completed. On the basis of area it was relatively far smaller although the overall distribution was probably skewed by a few villages containing for above average proportions of marshland and abandoned land: Khanh Hau had a reported 800 hectares while the average village had 2,300 hectares, almost three times the amount. As shown in the district sketch, only one other village appeared smaller in this respect. The shape of Khanh Hau--as well as shapes of the other villages in the district--is clearly shown in the district sketch.

A few illustrations of ground distances within Khanh Hau give one some appreciation of its actual size. (Note Figure 6.) For example, the national highway that cut through its rice fields extended for a distance of four kilometers, which would represent a one hour walk. A diagonal connecting the far corners in Hamlets Dinh "B" and Cau equaled almost five kilometers. The smaller road, which was the village street, extended for a distance of 1.2 kilometers and the connecting roads, about one-half kilometer each. Because of the distances, interprovincial town buses occasionally served as intra-village buses, especially for residents of Hamlet Cau interested in visiting the village hall, even though the buses would carry them only to the connecting street.

If one were to fly over the village the major landmarks that would be noted first probably would be the one large settlement area and the two small roads connecting it with the main highway, the compound of newly built building near the highway and seemingly set apart from all other village life, the canal coming into the edge of the major settlement, and a rising structure at the side of a large tomb. In another passing one might then note the grouping of various buildings which if the viewer is familiar with Vietnamese villages would be recognized as the community center--the village primary school with its "U" shaped pattern, the village dinh or temple, the village hall--just an ordinary structure identified by its closeness to the dinh--and the village guard post with its four brick watchtowers at the four corners of the tin-roofed barracks.

A closer view of these landmarks would help to establish their identification and would provide some additional impressions of this village. The group of new buildings--elongated structures near the highway--belonged to the Fundamental School, established by UNESCO and the national Department of Education for the purpose of giving school teachers an additional year of experience in community development and adult education programs. The newly constructed building near the tomb would become the temple of a famous native son, Marshal Nguyen Huynh Duc (1747-1819). The village hall would be noted as a one-room thatched roof structure.

Figure 6 The Village of Khanh Hau
Long An Province

Standing on one of the narrow gravel roads leading into the major settlement, one could see that the flat, delta land was broken only by the houses and surrounding trees, tombs and the almost incessant movement of speeding top-heavy buses on the national highway carrying passengers to and from the central markets in Saigon. But almost completely missing from this panoramic view would be evidence of any commercial center, for while the village contained six or so small retail stores with thatched and tin roofs it completely lacked a central market or even a site where market exchange occurred.[7]

Without the aid of a village map it would be impossible to determine the boundaries of the village. As the preceding sketch shows, settlements were scattered throughout--along the narrow village road on the left, along the streams on the right and bottom, and in two other areas. What this pattern suggests is true--the village was not a natural, soci-economic community. Rather it had been artificially created by governmental fiat in 1917 with the consolidation of two smaller villages. More inclined to be natural communities, the old village of Tuong Khanh consisted of Hamlets Thu Tuu, Dinh (divided since 1957 into Dinh "A" and "B") and Moi, and that of Nhan Hau, of Nhan Hau and Cau complete with their separate dinhs that still existed. In fact in February, 1958, the latter community (the writer calls this the "East Village,") reconstructed its dinh. It held its own set of annual community ceremonies administered by its separate set of organized village notables tied into the overall social organization only by one person, the Ke Hien or most honored villager.[8]

For a stranger the streams would not clearly define the boundaries since settlements also existed on the other sides. In fact a more populated settlement, belonging to a different province, shared a stream boundary with Hamlet Cau. Other village boundaries were ordinary paths between rice fields, not distinguishable from other such paths.

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[7]Much more information about the economic and social patterns can be obtained from the other, parallel studies made by James Hendry and Gerald Hickey.

[8]Never fully clarified was the answer as to whether each community would have had its own Ke Hien if the Ke Hien had by chance lived in the other old village of Tuong Khanh which after consolidation became the more dominant, enjoying the site of the major village activities--the school, village hall, and guardpost.

A fairly accurate population profile can be drawn on the basis of reports submitted by the village council to higher authorities even though some of these were probably prepared in a ex-cathedra spirit. According to a family survey prepared in 1958, the population of the village was almost 3,200, spread among 580 households with an average of 5.5 persons per household. An earlier survey, probably in 1956 or 1957, indicated the following division among the five hamlets, Hamlet Dinh being still viewed as one hamlet.

Hamlet	Houses	Persons
Dinh	221	1,132
Moi	75	371
Thu Tuu	87	460
Nhon Hau	114	592
Cai	79	412
	576	2,967

Women slightly outnumbered the men, 51o/o to 49o/o; and age groupings showed 45 percent under the age of 15; 52 percent between 15 and 64; and 3 percent over 65 years of age. Since the number of births in recent years was in such proportions to deaths as 176 to 26, 166 to 27, and 123 to 37 while the total population remained relatively stable, one could conclude that considerable emigration occurred. Further analysis, prepared by the Fundamental School[9] showed this to consist of the younger men in the 20 to 25 age bracket. Of the annual deaths 63 percent were persons less than 15 years of age, as based on rates in 1954 and 1955. Marriages were occurring in the village at the rate of 28 in 1954, 41 in 1955, and 17 in 1956.

In other reports given to the higher authorities in 1958 the Village Council offered the following data about the village and the villagers: that 600 of the 800 hectares in the village were used for growing rice and 70 additional hectares for vegetables; that 17 of the rice-field hectares belonged to the village (making it about typical for the general proportion of three percent throughout the southern provinces); that economic-wise, 10 percent of the population was "better off," 70 percent had sufficient income, and

[9]This information, including much of the statistical data to follow in this profile, were given by the Fundamental School with the caveat that its accuracy was subject to considerable doubt.

20 percent, insufficient income; that the problem of illiteracy was not "serious" although 216 persons were reported as illiterates and that 90 percent of the employed were in agriculture, five percent in commerce, and five percent in industry (probably the brick kiln in an adjacent community and the rice mills in the village). As shown in considerable detail in the chapters on finance, land ownership patterns in the village no longer reflected the predominance of the former large, absentee landowner whose holdings as a result of the agrarian reform movement had been reduced from something over 50 percent of the total to 16 percent in order to comply with the legal maximum of 100 hectares.[10]

Since the focal point of administrative activity in Khanh Hau was the Village Hall, it is worth noting in some detail the nature of this building and its contents. During the period of this study considerable improvement was made in it, resulting in a basic change from a shack-like structure to one more closely resembling a fairly permanent building of plastered bricks. During most of the time the Village Hall consisted of a high-pitched, thatched roof, and wooden walls on three sides with the fourth side which faced a side of the Dinh some four meters away entirely open excepting for the supporting beams. Improvements began with tiling the dirt floor, rearranging the furniture largely by removing the two large wooden beds in two corners, and setting the altar back closer to the center back wall. The other furniture included four desks, two large cabinets (one is used by the clerk and the other by the Civil Status Councillor), the medical cabinet, a small tea table surrounded by four chairs and a two-seater bench with a back and arms, a heavier oblong table with a bench on each side, and a movable bulletin board. Also in a corner was the bright orange colored barrel-size drum used for various purposes -- calling the handyman who prepared the tea, announcing the end of school recesses for the two secondary school classes in the nearby metal quonset (a schoolboy would come in and give the drum a heavy beating that would drown out all conversation), and for calling general meetings to order. For village ceremonies the drum was moved over to the Dinh. If one stood in the center of the open side and faced the interior he would have seen the following posters and announcements on the walls: on the right wall a large poster showing pictures of the visit of the Korean President to Viet-Nam; alongside an organization

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[10]According to one informant, the wealthiest resident of the village, the Ke Hien had acquired most of his wealth serving as the local agent for this absentee landowner.

chart of the village information system; a list of the members of the Village Anti-Communist Denunciation Committee; then, an area marked off with the sign "Announcements," under which was a list of winning numbers in a recent national lottery (the Long An Province Chief won one of the major prizes at one time during this study -- one million piasters plus two smaller prizes amounting to another 20,000 or so piasters), a copy of a letter from another province chief regarding use of vacated lands; an announcement from the National Department of Taxation regarding the deadline for the payment of the motor vehicle tax, and a typewritten announcement prepared by the Village Council showing the fees to be charged for various certificates. Farther along the same wall was another pictorial bulletin about various athletic contests. And carelessly pasted over some other bulletin was an announcement about the forthcoming Constitution Day celebration. Dominating the village altar, on the back wall was the framed list of the dead notables whose names were written in Chinese characters on a red paper. A small national flag and a portrait photo of the President hung above the altar. On each side was a life-size set of the traditional weapons. The left wall was covered by bulletins of various sorts: an announcement about a motor-bike race; pictures of the visit of members of the press to a community development project and of a pipe manufacturing plant in Viet Nam; the well-publicized list of six points regarding reunification with North Viet-Nam; a bulletin stating why the village should build a maternity; and one regarding the military draft schedule for the coming months. On the right wall, far above the eye-level bulletins, hung a parade-size banner bearing the words, "Resolution to eliminate the agents of Communism." And on three desks were small signs designating the Police Chief, Civil Status Councillor, and Finance Councillor. The portable typewriter used by the clerk, the Police Chief, and Civil Status Councillor sat on the remaining desk. Near the entrance side was located a weather-beaten blackboard held by a three-legged support. The movable bulletin board that served partly as a wall for the fourth side contained additional pictorial bulletins depicting activities of the central government, in particular of the President.[11]

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[11] It should be mentioned that the hamlets within the village did not contain any administrative buildings. The hamlet chiefs conducted their business in their private homes.

The Village Council

At the time this study began the Council consisted of a chief[12] and four other councillors. The titles of the four councillors were: (1) social and economics affairs; (2) police; (3) finance; and (4) civil status and information. (Figure 7). To the extent that a hierarchy was needed, the order of rank followed this sequence, with the social and economics affairs councillor serving as deputy chief--in fact he tended to view himself firstly in the latter capacity. Midway during the period of this study, with the resignation of the Finance Councillor came a consolidation of functions with the Village Chief assuming duties in the field of finance. Near the end came another change the Deputy Chief was appointed Deputy Canton Chief. His functions were transferred to the Chief. And in the same order a new Finance Councillor was appointed. All council members were chosen in the same fashion--by the Chief of Province and, in principle, on the basis of recommendations of the District and when appropriate, of the Village Chief. All, likewise, served for indefinite terms, subject to removal by the appointing authority.

For the most part the duties of the council members could be inferred from the titles given above. The Chief served as general coordinator and executive of the Village Council. The Social and Economics Affairs Councillor in addition to participating with the Village Chief in various activities, because of his assignment as Deputy Chief, assumed responsibility from time to time for miscellaneous activities in the broad fields covered by his title. The Police Councillor, or Police Chief as more often called, described his duties as (1) a member of the Village Council; (2) Chief of the village Self-Defense Corps and (3) intelligence officer for the district in charge of secret affairs. He was assuming, it is fair to say, that normal police duties should be added to this list. Two major functions were assigned to the Finance Councillor: the collection of taxes and the maintenance of the various financial records. And the lowest ranking member served in two capacities: as the clerk and recorder of vital statistics, and as the village information agent, a task transferred from the Police Chief after the Council had

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[12] "Representative" is the literal translation of the title Dai-dien of the Village Chief and therefore would be more accurate; however herein he will be called "chief" which was the English equivalent of the title, Ca, used by the villagers and which existed in the Council of the colonial period. Ca, itself, was originally granted the eldest villager or the one at the top of the social hierarchy.

Figure 7

Administrative Agents and Agencies in Khanh Hau: The Village Council and Related Agents and Agencies, and Other Selected Agencies+

Village Council

1. Chief
2. Deputy Chief (Social and Economic Affairs)
3. Police Chief
4. Finance Councillor
5. Civil Status and Information Councillor

Village Self-Defense Guard

Village Employees

1. Clerk
2. Orderly

Hamlet Agencies (Same in all six hamlets)

1. Chief
2. Deputy Chief
3. Self-Defense Corps
4. Five-Family Groups

Other Village Level Agencies

1. Republican Youth Group
2. Steering Committee for the Communist Denunciation Campaign
3. First Aid Agent (later duty assumed by Civil Status Councillor)
4. Kindergarten School
5. Primary School
6. Secondary School
7. Agricultural Credit Committee
8. Agrarian Reform Committee
9. Marshal Nguyen Huynh Duc Tomb Reconstruction Committee
10. Committee on Taxes
11. Committee for Harvest Protection
12. Committee for use of the Pump (temporary)

Other Governmental Agencies:

1. Farmers Association (May, 1959)
2. Parents Association
3. Agricultural Extension Club

+ Non-administrative agency in which Village Council took considerable interest: Council of Notables for Hamlets Moi, Thu Tuu, Dinh "A," and Dinh "B."

As of June, 1958 with exception noted.

proposed this to the District Chief, contending that other duties already were overburdening the Police Chief.

According to the Village Chief all members of the Council had received training--he did not necessarily judge it as adequate or inadequate but he did state that it was "long"--lasting about one month. This was a provincial-wide program sponsored by the chief of province in 1956 or 1957: classes were held in morning and afternoon and the councillors lived in the province town during the entire training period. Additional training in the field of information had been received at another time. The major program, as outlined by the village chief, was based on this schedule: 0530-0730: physical exercise and breakfast; 0800-1100, classes; 1400-1600, classes; 1900-2000, self-criticism, which, as he described it, was a mutual criticism exercise--fellow students were encouraged to point out each other's faults. This practice, the chief added, was later adopted by the Village Council. Once a month members of the Council would be given the opportunity to criticize each other: "If I were out of order on some occasion, the other members would be free to reprimand me." (This was said in a somewhat joking manner which led the writer to wonder as to the extent such a practice actually did exist. Unfortunately no further examples were obtained; hence the question as to its application and use must be left unanswered).

During the period of this study some major increases occurred in the salaries of some council members. The actual increases as well as the salaries are shown in the Figure 8. This, it should be noted, includes all of the paid personnel considered as part of the village administration.

As the table shows, the highest income was received by the Police Chief; however he received two separate payments, one for his services on the Council and the other for serving as head of the village Self-Guard. Setting aside the latter payment, the highest paid official becomes the Village Chief --a change intended to recognize the importance of the chief of village councils.[13] The lowest paid member of the Council also the lowest in the administrative hierarchy, was the Civil Status Officer, who before being assigned the duties of Information Agent received only 600$ per month. But that salary as such was not correlated with status is indicated by

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[13]Lam Le Trinh, _____, p. 68.

Figure 8

Khanh Hau Village Personnel

Salaries and Salary Increases of Council Members, Hamlet Chiefs, Village Employees and Members of Self-Guard

Position	Salaries in 1958		Percent of Increase
	March	September	
Council Members:			
Chief	907$	1500$	66o/o
Social and Economics Affairs	907	1007	11
Police			
- Law enforcement	1176	1400	
- Chief of Self Guard		500 1900	62
Finance	1176	1376	17
Civil Status			
- Civil Status	604	804	
- Information	300	300 1104	22
Hamlet Chiefs	300	300	-
Village Employees:			
Council clerk	910	910	-
General worker	600	600	-
First aid agent	300	300	-
Self-guard members	900	900	-

Source: Interviews with Khanh Hau village chief and deputy chief.

the relatively low salary of the Deputy Chief or Social and Economics Affairs Councillor.[14]

An important adjunct to the Village Council was the position of Village Clerk. This position was assigned or had assumed varied tasks, depending considerably upon the wishes of the council members. Tasks, in other words, could be assigned to the Clerk or performed by the councillors themselves for the Clerk served as assistant to all councillors.[15]

Other Village Level Agencies

Three other organizations plus several ad hoc, temporary committees completed the village level pattern of organization. The organizations were the village Self-Guard, the Republican Youth Group, and the Communist Denunciation Committee.

The Self-Guard, in essence a military unit stationed in the village, functioned under the direction of the police chief with the close supervision[16] of a Self-Guard officer at the district level. The strength of the guard force varied from 13 to 17 members, depending upon the number in training at the civil guard training camp some 25 kilometers closer toward Saigon or temporarily assigned to some other village or to the cantonal mobile unit. According to the Police Chief, all members had received some military training at the civil guard post. While in principle members of the Self-Guard were village residents, in practice exceptions occurred, largely because of discipline problems--a self-guard member of another village might be transferred to Khanh Hau if he had had a conflict with a local resident. Each member of this guard unit carred a weapon when on duty, usually a bolt-action rifle, and wore a simple uniform of black cloth. Quarters were provided in the barracks across from the village hall; however, local residents, who were in the majority, returned to their homes when off duty. As indicated in the preceding table, each guard member received a monthly salary of 900$ and this was paid directly by the district. Each month one member would collect the payment for the entire guard.

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[14]Some additional information about salary payments is presented in the first chapter on village finance.

[15]When the deputy chief became deputy canton chief, he appointed the village clerk his canton clerk. The council then chose as the new clerk a village resident who was one of the most active in community affairs and a close friend of the council.

[16]"Close supervision" is based on explanation given by the Village Police Chief: one member of the unit had to report in person each day to the district office.

The Government Manual listed the following duties for the village Self-Guard: to help the local authorities maintain public order and security, to prevent sabotage and terroristic activities, to protect public works and strategic locations, and to provide emergency and disaster relief. The Khanh Hau officials would add: to accompany village officials when visiting hamlets for the purpose of tax collection and to serve as hamlet messengers for the Village Council.[17]

The youth group, "Youths of the Republic of Viet-Nam," was still in its formative stage during the period of this study. It was an amalgamation of two earlier groups, one for the males and one for the females. This newly-established organization as depicted in an elaborate organization chart hanging in the village hall--a chart containing photographs of some of the key members--was the most complex found in the village. (The Farmers' Association, also established late in this study proved a close second, although, technically, it was not part of village organization, having no direct relationship to the Village Council.) It contained an advisory board, a village executive committee, a group leader, a training and propaganda section, financial-economic commissioners, reception commissioners, social commissioners, sports and gymnastic commissioners, and hamlet youth leaders. (Also blank spaces were marked in the elaborate organization chart for hamlet subgroups to be added later.) The major connecting link with the Village Council was the village Police Chief, the group leader. But also a link was established through the advisory board since it contained both the Village Council Chief and Deputy Chief. Hamlet chiefs served as the hamlet youth leaders. While in principle only persons between the ages of 18 and 33 qualified, in practice some additional villagers had participated--at least in the former group of males--for, as the village chief explained, some of the older men enjoyed playing football.

As the titles of some of its commissioners indicates, this organization was established to work in the field of sports, propaganda, and social affairs. The latter could include community development activities. While to be headed by the Village Police Chief, active roles were to be assumed by various other members.

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[17] At the national level the central agency was located in the Executive Office rather than in either the Interior Department, in which the Civil Guard is located, or the Defense Department. The central "inspectorate" was established in 1956 and the last reorganization of the Self-Guard occurred in April 1957. Viet-Nam Government Organization Manual - 1957-58, p. 78.

The other organization, which also had its description posted in the village hall--in fact its table of organization was carefully framed and covered by glass--was the "Steering Committee for the Communist Denunciation Campaign." According to the village Chief, this committee of 24 members consisted of leaders from the various hamlets. It was viewed as one of the most select groups in the village. All members of the Village Council were on the committee, while two of the five councillors held key positions: the Deputy Chief was committee chairman and the Civil Status Councillor, secretary-general or general administrator. The Village Chief and Police Chief were two of the four general "active commissioners," and the Finance Councillor served as the only "liaison officer." Also all of the remaining members were identifed as having positions either in village social or administrative organizations: five members, for example, including the vice-chairman, were identified by their positions in the council of notables although none of the top-ranking notables were included, perhaps because of their age. Other members included hamlet chiefs, deputy hamlet chiefs, and assistant chiefs of "platoons" and of "sections," a title not fully clarified.

According to the Village Chief, the function of this committee was to conduct the monthly anti-communist meeting--that is, to select the speaker and assist in the meeting. The committee was also to assist in other anti-communist programs.

The Village Council had the aid of several other committees. Some of these were temporary, being organized for one specific project, while others were functioning on a continuing basis. As an illustration of the former, the village had had an agrarian reform committee consisting of the Village Council and one representative of the rentors and one of the landlords. However, with the completion of the sale of large holdings to the tenants, this committee apparently, insofar as the writer could determined, had gone out of existence. Presumably of more current interest was the "Agricultural Credit Committee," which likewise was supposed to contain some members in addition to the Village Councillors and to serve as a complaint board for villagers who had been rejected as applicants for loans by the Village Council. However, apparently this committee never functioned as such, yet whether its inactivity was due to lack of complaints or, as the writer suspects, to the inclination of the more informal pattern of village administration to assume the role, namely for the Village Council members themselves to settle such questions, remains undetermined.

It is possible to give only a few examples of other, temporary committees that had been set up at times in the village. The correspondence files showed that in June, 1957,

the District Chief asked the villages to create "Committees on Taxes." In the same letter he advised that the position of chairman should be filled either by the village council chief or the commander of the civil guard. The two additional members were to be a group leader of the village self-guard and the finance commissioner. In Khanh Hau, the Village Council Chief assumed the committee chairmanship and the Police Chief as leader of the Self-Guard also joined the committee. A year earlier a "Committee for the Harvest" had been created, whether by the request of higher authorities was not determined, to supervise the rice fields, in particular, to report any insect attacks either to the Village Council or to the Provincial Agricultural Office. The committee consisted of all hamlet chiefs. A more recently established committee-and one of a more temporary nature--was, as the Chief and Deputy Chief had titled it, the "Committee for the Use of the Pump." Consisting of nine farmers, selected in an informal manner (as the writer concluded from the discussion with the chief and deputy chief), this committee functioned for three weeks or so during the 1958 growing season to coordinate the use of a water pump borrowed by the Fundamental School from a central governmental agency.

Another temporary committee that was created and performed most of its task during the period this study, was titled the "Marshall Nguyen Huynh Duc Tomb Reconstruction Committee." A specific authorization for establishing this committee was granted by the Chief of Province since it was to be concerned with the solicitation of funds from various communities. Its nine members were selected at an open meeting of persons interested in the project. Heading the committee was the Ke Hien--the most honored man in the village--and three vice-presidents consisting of the Village Chief, the Director of the Fundamental School who was greatly admired by the villagers for his active interest in village problems, and an assistant to the director. With the exception of one member, a merchant from the province town, all others were also from the village. The objective of this committee was to raise funds for enlarging as well as reconstructing the tomb of this famous marshal. Some of its operations are described in another section; in brief its story was one of complete success, although the funds came mostly from sources not anticipated by the village officials.

Hamlet Agencies

Until 1957 the village contained only five hamlets and thus five hamlet organizations. However, in that year at the request of the Village Council the provincial authorities divided the most populous hamlet, Dinh, into Dinh "A" and "B."

This division was needed, the Village Council pleaded, because the work load had become too heavy for the hamlet chief--that is, as the Chief explained, he was not able to contact all five-family heads nor to check the entire area in a reasonable time. The boundaries for the new hamlets were drawn by the Village Council with the advise of residents. The main criteria was an even division of houses; as a result the boundary line curved in and around the settlements. On the other hand relatively little attention was paid to the delineation of the fields as such since, it can be inferred, the concern was limited to the residents and their relationship to hamlet administration.

Hamlet administration consisted of three major agencies --the Hamlet Chief, the Self-Defense Corps, and the Five-Family organization. These made up the local administrative apparatus through which the Village Council maintained its contacts with the people and conducted some functions.

While in principle the Village Council had the privilege of choosing the Hamlet Chiefs, subject to the approval of the District Chief, according to the Khanh Hau village officials, the Hamlet Chiefs were, in practice, chosen by the people. Any time a vacancy occurred, a meeting would be held in the hamlet for the purpose of nominating and selecting the next chief. Such a meeting occurred in December, 1956, in order to elect a new hamlet chief. According to the report submitted to the district, after a "heated discussion" the group by "universal suffrage" chose one of two candidates for the position. The winning candidate apparently received 29 out of about 35 votes. But a significant variation of this procedure occurred in 1957 for the selection of the Hamlet Chief for Hamlet Dinh "A". At that meeting in addition to "participants" who probably were residents of the hamlet, three other Hamlet Chiefs as well as the Village Council were present and the group came to its conclusion, apparently without the formality of a secret ballot or "universal suffrage." As stated in its report, the choice was made on the basis of a "common agreement." While acceptance by the district chief was not viewed as a mere formality, the Village Council assumed that its recommendations would be accepted unless some major objection, such as a security matter, occurred.

Beginning in 1957 the Hamlet Chiefs were authorized an allowance of 300 piasters a month to be paid out of provincial funds if village funds were lacking, which without doubt was the case in Khanh Hau. In addition special payments could be made for extraordinary expenses such as trips to district conferences and training programs. Also, each Hamlet Chief was authorized to appoint a deputy hamlet

chief who would assist him in his various duties. However, no allowance was established for the deputy.

The Hamlet Chiefs were expected to perform various duties apart from what might be called "general administration" or general surveillance of hamlet affairs. They were viewed by the Village Council as heads of the Five Family groups, as the leaders of the hamlet Self-Defense groups, and as the hamlet Information Agents, although the Hamlet Chief could appoint someone else to administer the last function. In addition, they were viewed as judges for civil disputes and as informants for general law enforcement as well as for security matters. Perhaps indicative of the relative importance Hamlet Chiefs attached to their different duties was the order stated by one Hamlet Chief, When asked to list his duties, he replied: (1) to settle disputes, (2) to take care of reconstruction work in the hamlet, (3) to come to the Village Hall to get orders and to get information on communist denunciation and (4) to keep the people informed. A major objective in "reconstruction work" was keeping the footpaths and roads reasonably free of mud for the school children. Like the Village Council members Hamlet Chiefs and their deputies served for indefinite terms.

The hamlet Self-Defense Corps consisted of all men between the ages of 18 and 45. Service in this was compulsory unless the individual could find some grounds for exemption, such as a specific authorization from the higher authorities as was the case, at least at one time, for certain positions in the village youth organization. The function of this organization was to serve as the hamlet night-watch. Its members were non-paid and armed only with sticks and ropes of prescribed lengths. Apart from maintaining a listening post, from which with the assistance of a warning call, such as a wooden drum, the Village Self-Guard could be called, it was expected that periodic patrols would be made. While the Hamlet Chief served as the main leader, he was authorized to appoint leaders for the different squads. On the average every member was on duty one out of every seven to ten nights. However, during the period of duty, he might be on "active status", or awake, only two or three hours, depending upon the size of the group.

When asked what he considered to be the major changes in the village during the past twenty years, the Police Chief included in his reply the establishment of the Five-Family system. In his opinion this organization had played an effective role in disseminating news about activities of the Village Council, and, it is fair to say, about governmental administration, insofar as news came to the Village. Established in 1955 the original system involved not only the

appointment of a head for every five families but also the assignment of specific duties to each family head within the group. These duties were: economic affairs, tax collection, social affairs, hygiene, and youth activities. The head of the entire group as well as each family head was assigned one of these five duties. Responsibility for organizing and maintaining the system belonged to the Village Council and Hamlet Chiefs. Insofar as possible, houses would be grouped according to their proximity to each other. Serving for indefinite terms, the actual heads of each group were selected by the members themselves subject to the approval of the Village Council. All groups and all families within the groups were assigned a code number. Thus, a house with the number "5/21" painted on its doorway was in the fifth Five-Family group in the hamlet and was the 21st house. Tied into the family numbering system were the family or household declaration forms--a statement listing all members of the household that had to be available for inspection at any time.

All told the Village in May, 1958, was listed as having 114 five family groups living under 567 roofs.

Although in principle the five-family system was set up as a mutual assistance institution, in practice it had come to be recognized as part of the security, propaganda and information organizations of the village. A general organization chart of the Village showed the Five Family units under the command of the police chief. At the same time a special chart for the village information system showed the heads of the Five Families serving as "Five Family Chiefs of Information." Its main role, as viewed by one villager, was to exercise strict control "over strangers."

Other Agencies in the Village

The criteria for the selection of the above agencies was their direct connection with the Village Council. Those various agencies along with the Village Council constituted the administrative organization of the Village. Thus, they were included in the preparation of this study. But if the study had been broadened to deal with all public agencies, political as well as administrative, central governmental as well as village and hamlet, several others would have been included. For example incidental to preparing this study the writer became generally familiar with the following agencies. A small and not too active agricultural extension group--a 4-H club--was reported as conducting some experiments in growing rice and other crops. Also in the field of agriculture

was the cooperative, which although a private organization, still in principle worked closely with agricultural agencies, and the Farmers' Association, a quasi-public agency that was established during the period of this study and which incidental to a discussion of security measures in the village will be discussed. The public school was also another administrative agency that was not directly examined, although some observations the relation of the Village Council to its affairs and to certain other educational activities were made. Along with it was the parents association that, as mentioned later in this study, apparently became active on some occasions but the writer never attempted to explore its organization as such, using merely the reports--and gossip--offered by members of the Village Council. Also at times in the Village, especially in the years just preceding this study, 1956 and 1957, apparently three or so members of the mobile Civic Action teams were present in the village for extended periods of time, helping with community affairs. Likewise involved in community as well as in political affairs were two political parties: the Citizen's Assembly or Collectivity (Tap Doan Cong Dan) and the National Revolutionary Movement (Phong Trao Cach Mang Quoc Gia) by which in 1958 the former party organization and members were to be absorbed. The latter party, according to the deputy chief of the Village Council, had a membership in 1958 of over 200 "paid-up" members, monthly dues being 10$.

In addition to these agencies, if one were to study fully the social dynamics of administrative life in this village, it would be necessary to include one agency that is not found in any other village in Viet-Nam--the Fundamental School. Without doubt this agency had considerable impact on the pattern of activities in the village, with its staff of 16 and, moreover, with its interests that were closely related to community development programs. This agency was established by UNESCO and the national department of Education in 1957, as a means for renewing the country's social and economic life and involving the whole population in the work of national reconstruction.[18] Its plan of action for the Fundamental School or basic education center consisted of three proposals: (1) to train teachers for community schools by means of accelerated courses; (2) to supply audi-visual equipment for teaching in rural schools; and (3) to try out a "community

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[18] International Bureau of Education, Facilities for Education in Rural Areas, XXIst International Conference on Public Education, UNESCO, Geneva, 1958, p. 237.

living experiment" in the Village of Khanh Hau. It was through this third program that the school became most closely involved with village affairs ranging from the issue of digging a canal, which represented a major step forward in the economic pattern of the village, to literacy classes, and to programs of public health, namely, education as to improving water supply, the need for vacinations, and the establishment of a maternity. Its staff included an agricultural worker who had received much of his training at an American university and a representative of UNESCO who was a specialist in basic education.

Chapter IV

Financial Affairs: Budget, Revenues, Expenditures

This and the following chapter delve fairly deeply into the financial affairs of Khanh Hau. In part the writer was inclined to do this because the data were available. But also because detailed analyses should serve as a useful guide for similar research in other villages--especially in those of a much larger size for which such analyses would, of course, be even more valuable.

The first chapter encompasses the "cycle" of finance, that is, the sequence beginning with budget preparation and closing with the expenditures. To be sure, in practice these activities were going on almost simultaneously; however, for purposes of analysis it is essential to organize them in some arbitrary fashion. Within each phase of the cycle, the writer has developed what analyses seemed feasible and desirable in an effort to probe into the nature of village financial affairs. The second chapter, then, looks more intensively at one particular aspect in the cycle--the collection of the rice field taxes. Again the objective was to use that analysis as a means for more fully developing a broad appreciation of administrative practices in Khanh Hau.[1]

Preparation of the Budget

Like the province and the central government, the village in Viet-Nam enjoyed a separate budget. This is a concomitant of its possessing a "moral personality," or what is the equivalent in Anglo-Saxon administrative law, the powers of a corporate body. On the other hand no budgets as such were prepared for the other levels of administration below the province--the districts, cantons, and hamlets.

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[1] A valuable reference was a discussion of village budgetary and financial procedures written by the Vice-Rector of the National Institute of Administration: Nghiem Dang, "The Village Budget in Vietnam," on file in the library of the Institute. (Mimeo.). The original article in Vietnamese appeared in the Administrative Research, Vol. II, No. 6 (Nov. 1958), Journal of the Association for Administrative Studies, Saigon, pp. 41-63. His analysis was concentrated on an examination and evaluation of the statutory provisions.

The steps in the preparation of the budget concerned largely the village officials, the provincial village finance office, and the Province Chief, with the district serving in its typical capacity as the facilitator-agitator and liaison office. According to the national policy the village budget was drafted by the village Financial Councillor, submitted to the Village Council for approval, and then presented to the Provincial Chief for final approval shortly prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year, which is the calendar year plus 20 days. And this with a few minor exceptions was the system found in Khanh Hau.

Budget processing for Khanh Hau required at least two months. After the entire Council had signed the draft, it was forwarded through channels to the village budget officer in the provincial headquarters. As explained by this officer, his major task concerned checking the arithmetic. Upon completing his review he would return it through channels to the village for final drafting which consisted of preparing four copies "in ink" to be resubmitted for final approval by the Province Chief. Although this procedure should be completed prior to the beginning of the calendar year, for 1958 the budget officer had not received the final copies by the 28th of March. Delay as such seemed to be accepted as part of the village-provincial budget system, and insofar as this observer could determine it seemed to have no adverse effect on administration in Khanh Hau.

There might have been many sound reasons for the delay --hence, the delay as such is not to be seriously criticized in this examination. Concern over limited financial resources might have encouraged delay in deciding on budgets; also the problem of protection of life and property because of anti-governmental forces in the province might have been given a priority. In recent years provincial and village officials in Long An have had more serious problems than maintaining a budget schedule. Furthermore no serious interruption occurred if budgets were delayed since the general scheme for administering the budget anticipated delays--customary expenditures, for example, might be continued even though the budget as such had not been adopted.[2]

The village budget document was a printed form prepared by the Province of Long An and used by all villages. Its complete arrangement is shown in Appendix "A" which also shows the specific accounts actually employed by Khanh Hau--being a

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[2]Dang, "The Village Budget in Viet-Nam," _____.

small village only about 25o/o of the items were used. The form required, in addition to estimates for the coming year, the inclusion of the past year budget figures and calculation of percentage increases and decreases for each item.

With the exception of a review for clerical errors, drafting a proposed budget evidently was considered as the final step rather than a basis for negotiation. According to the village Deputy Chief any significant changes in proposed expenditures had to be approved by the District Chief, even before the first draft of the budget was submitted.

As part of the budget process, it was necessary for the Khanh Hau officials to balance the budget which, because of the limited resources in the village, might have caused a major problem. However, this was resolved in a simple, easy fashion--the procedure consisted in determining the amount of the deficit and adding a comparable sum in the revenue column with the source indicated as "subventions" from the Province. According to the District Chief only three of the nine villages in the District did not need subventions--they possessed many communal rice fields, he explained.

After the four copies of the budget had been signed by the Provincial Chief, three were retained and one returned to the Village for its file. "Filing the budget" in Khanh Hau meant setting it on some shelf in the cabinet used by the Village Clerk.

The Pattern of Revenue Collections

General View

Some perspective of the revenue collection pattern of Khanh Hau can be gained from examining Figure 9A which contains both the budgeted revenues and the reported revenues for the three year period ending December 31, 1958. Unfortunately Figure 9A is not complete since some property taxes were paid directly to the provincial offices. As a result these might or might not be reported in village records, for the village depended upon the province to forward such information. However, regardless of this limitation (which probably could have been overcome by further research into provincial records) it is still possible to gain considerable appreciation of the overall pattern.

Figure 9A

Khanh-Hau Village Revenues
Proposed** and Reported -- 1956, 1957, and 1958

	1956		1957		1958	
Tax Surcharges	Proposed	Reported	Proposed	Reported	Proposed	Reported
Rice fields	2,683$	2,293$	2,683$	1,716$	2,860$	4,183$
Garden plots	1,024	406	1,024	310	1,040	653
House and sites	376	48	376	69	650	251
Licenses	568	2,447	750	1,459	570	738
Animals	1,350	190	1,360	2,055	4,540	5,145
Vehicles	--	--	--	--	40	--
Delinquent payments	13,143	125	14,943	--	9,500	--
Village property						
Rice fields	45,000	46,105	27,158	21,415	20,000	14,010
Other lands	679	306	729	422	2,000	1,160
Other Sources						
Fines	200	209	1,000	400	800	260
Fees	3,000	2,981	12,000	10,805	10,000	1,030
Contributions for ceremonies	400	--	500	--	--	--
Other	--	260	--	15	--	50
Loans and subventions						
Loans	--	--	--	9,000	--	14,200
Subventions	--	--	--	28,550	67,000	47,000
Totals	68,423$	55,370$	62,523$	76,216$	119,000$	88,680$

** Proposed revenues also included funds either in village or in provincial treasury: 1956, 5,149$; 1957, 1,345$; and 1958, 1,000$.

Source: Village budget documents on file in Village Hall, data prepared by Long An province village budget officer, and Khanh Hau Cash Receipts Books.

Of most significance at this moment, Figure 9A shows the various sources of revenue and their relative importance both as viewed by the village officials in their proposed budgets and as indicated by the reported returns, regardless of the shortcomings of data about private rice field and garden plot taxes.

As shown in the 1958 proposed budget the most important source of revenue for the village was located outside the village itself--from outright grants made by the province. The 67,000$ set for this revenue source amounted to 52.3 per cent of the anticipated revenues which in other words meant that the village officials expected to raise less than one-half, about 44 per cent, of their revenues from within the village. The estimated revenues from within the village can more easily be evaluated with the use of the following computations:

	Proposed for 1958		
Tax surcharges			
Land			
Current	3,900$		
Delinquent	9,500	13,400$	25.8o/o
Other			
House and sites	650$		
Licenses	570		
Animals	4,540		
Vehicles	40	5,800$	11.2o/o
Village property		22,000$	42.3o/o
Other Sources			
Fines	800$		
Fees	10,000	10,800$	20.8o/o
Total from within village:		52,000$	100.0o/o

According to the above figures, from resources within the village it was anticipated that the public rice fields and other public lands would contribute the major proportion, about 42 per cent; private land tax surcharges were to contribute the next amount, about 26 per cent; fines and fees about 21 per cent and all other sources, largely the animal tax, about 11 per cent. Current land taxes were to bring in 3,900$ while delinquent taxes, 9,500$. Even though Khanh Hau had lost considerable revenue in recent years from a reduction in its

public land holdings and from the change in governmental policy regarding rental rates the public lands still continued to provide the most important source of revenue from within the village.

How the importance of these various sources developed during the three year period can also be suggested by Figure 9A. Fairly consistent were the revenues from private rice fields, garden plots, house and house sites, licenses, and fines. The greatest change, at least in terms of budget reporting, occurred in the amounts for subventions which were not reported prior to 1958. And the most significant decrease occurred in the revenues from the public property, from 45,000$ in 1956 to 20,000$ in 1958. For budgeting purposes the amounts estimated for fees increased greatly--from 3,000$ in 1956 to a peak of 12,000$ the following year--but this trend contrasted sharply with the revenues reported by the end of 1958, a budgeted item of 10,000$ and a reported income of 1,030$.

In general what Figure 9A shows is that during these three years Khanh Hau looked largely to its public rice fields for its main source of local revenue but that that source shrunk considerably. During this period the financial records showed increasing formal recognition of outside assistance as the mainstay in place of public rice fields. And by 1958 outside assistance became established as the official major source of revenue for the village. As of the end of 1958 the only bright spot in the local sources was the increase in revenues from the tax on animals. The actual tax collected from this source was almost twice the amount estimated for the local tax on private rice fields. But even when all of the local revenues are used in the comparison, the assistance from the Province was by far the more important source, amounting to 56 per cent of the proposed revenues in 1958.

The Basis of the Revenue Sources

The Surcharges on Central Government Taxes. As shown in Figure 9A all of the "taxes" were considered as surcharges on existing taxes imposed by the provincial and central governments. This meant that the specific provisions for these were set forth either by the Province or the central government and that the village tax represented an addition to a basic tax imposed by the higher authority.

The keystone to the tax on private rice fields was the original classification of the lands into the various grades according to the production rate of the major crop. Altogether there were six grades which, during the period 1956 to 1958, had been assigned basic or national tax rates ranging from

85$ down to 10$ per hectare. These two factors--the classification and the national rate--provided the basis, since the village tax levy was set by the national government as a percentage of the national levy. And for the southern provinces this levy had been limited to a maximum of five percent of the national levy, the actual percentage within this range of zero to five per cent to be proposed by the village and approved by the province. Thus, from one hectare of rice fields Khanh Hau could collect for village purposes not more than 4.25$ while the total levy, including the 10 per cent allowed for the provincial budget and a 0.1 per cent for the national Chamber of Agriculture, amounted to 97.84$ per hectare. Contrary to what might have been anticipated, it was the central government rather than the local that received most of the property tax. A somewhat similar system was used for grading and taxing the other private lands which in Khanh Hau were used mostly for gardens.

Taxes were levied on both houses and house sites. Only those houses with tile roofs were taxable, however, According to the 1957 tax record a total of 34 houses in Khanh Hau had been taxed. The village surcharge amounted to 250 per cent --the largest surcharge rate found in the village--of the national tax. Every taxable house, received the same levy, a total amounting to 29.70$ including 5.40$ for the central government, 10.80$ for the provincial government, and 13.50$ for the village. Similar ratios existed for the house site tax, the entire levy being based on the rate of three sous per square meter. The actual assessments, which included even a charge against the Village Council since it rented some land for house sites, varied considerably. One levy amounted to 78.37$. The charge for two hectares owned by Khanh Hau amounted to 337.48$. Much of the house site lands were not taxed as such; rather they were taxed under the garden plot levy which was their earlier tax--records had not been altered to reflect the charge in land use.

The Village Council was authorized to assess and collect business licenses for which the central and provincial charges did not exceed 200$. As a result the business license record listed grocery stores paying a uniform tax of 274.67$ each, based on a central levy of 90.80$ and similar amounts for the provincial and village governments. An additional charge of 2.27$ was credited to the Chamber of Commerce of the central government. The tax book itself contained three additional listings, apparently only for informational purposes--a grocery charged with a basic levy of 100$ and two oriental medicine doctors charged on the rate of 140$, which resulted in totals of 302.50$ for the grocery and 523.50$ for each of the two doctors.

Completing the list of the surcharge taxes were those for farm animals: for buffalo and oxen the village rate was 15$ and for horses, 40$. (Technically these were not surcharges as such.) The same rates were followed by the Province for oxen and buffalo, but for horses the province imposed 30$ rather than 40$.

Village property. In recent years the 18 hectares of public rice fields had been rented in accordance with Agrarian Reform legislation aimed primarily at private lands. But as the financial data have already shown, this legislation greatly affected public land revenues as well. During the years 1956 and 1957, in conformance with the national regulations, the rental rate was set on the basis of 40$ per gia of rice. Therefore, the actual rate per field--19 fields altogether--depended on the quantity of rice produced. For 1958 the village officials submitted an estimate of 499 gias to the provincial authorities.[3]

The village also owned about four hectares of additional agricultural lands which were divided into 19 separate garden plots and rented on a basis set by the province. For 1958 this amount was 0.30$ per meter. While the rice fields were rented on a yearly basis, garden plots were rented for an indefinite period.

Loans and Subventions. According to the village Deputy Chief, the Village could obtain either loans or subventions, the distinction being that the former had to be repaid while the latter was considered as an outright grant. If the village was only temporarily out of funds it should ask for a loan: in its application to the district chief it would name the village from which the loan was to be obtained. Once approval had been granted, the Khanh Hau official would call upon the other village for the funds or for an authorization to be drawn on the provincial treasury. According to the Village Chief the system worked smoothly since other villages in the same district having surplus funds were quite willing to make loans--in fact they would informally advise Khanh Hau officials of their available funds--and Khanh Hau would get an informal agreement with the village prior to submitting the request to the District. These loans were to be repaid as soon as funds had been obtained.

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[3]For 1959, the Province Chief ordered a return to a bidding system for public rice fields. According to Village Officials only the poor would be bidding since the villagers would follow the custom of reserving public lands for the needy.

Subventions on the other hand were made only under the order of the Province Chief. A subvention would be granted if all of Khanh Hau's funds had been depleted and no significant revenues were forthcoming. These subventions might come either from the treasury or from other villages on orders issued by the Chief.4

4Although the pattern of loans and subventions probably follows the above description, some doubt still lingers as to the actual operations. There is a question, for example, as to the actual practice regarding repayment of the loans. In an earlier interview with the village chief the writer had been told that while in theory a loan was to be repaid, in practice it was recognized that Khanh Hau being a poor village would never repay the loan. This view was upheld by the fact that no loans were repaid, insofar as the writer could determine, during the past three years.

Another unsolved question concerned the existence of a provincial mutual assistance fund. According to an article written by the secretary of the central government's Department of the Interior each province was to establish a Mutual Assistance Fund as a means for facilitating the granting of aid to smaller villages by, in effect, milking the more wealthy villages. Each village regardless of size was to contribute 1/10 of its total net revenue and villages having markets were to add 1/4 of their market revenues. This fund was to be used under the direction of the province chief whose plan must be approved by the Presidency. The plan was recognized both as a temporary measure to last only during the period of insecurity in the countryside and as an unfair burden on the better-off villages. Although Khanh Hau village officials were well aware of the subventions as such, they indicated no comprehension of this plan: the annual budget of Khanh Hau contained a provision for a contribution to the plan, but no payments were mentioned by the officials nor noted in the journals (however it is conceivable that some entry was made at the provincial office); and the deputy chief gave no indication of understanding the significance of a general announcement from the province chief in 1958 that the village reserve funds had been abolished and integrated with the provincial budget, which the writer interpreted as the elimination of the Mutual Assistance Fund. This lengthy commentary has been inserted for it deals with an issue of some interest that merits clarification when time permits.

The source of the article mentioned above is: Lam Le Trinh, "The Village Council in the Administrative Organization of Vietnam," Journal of the Association for Administrative Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 9-46.

Other Sources. Fines, fees, and contributions for ceremonies represented the other sources of revenue obtained from within the village, but in 1958 revenues were reported only for the first two. According to the village officials, fines up to 120$ may be imposed for minor offenses. This had not proved an important source of revenue. On the other hand, in 1958 fees for providing residents with copies of various vital statistical records and other certificates produced more than what was obtained from the garden plots, house and house sites, or licenses. The fee was based on the type of document issued--10$ for vital statistic records and up to 30$ for others.

The tremendous reduction in fee income from almost 11,000$ in 1957 to 1,000$ in 1958 was caused by the decision of the Province Chief to suspend these charges, According to the village Police Chief, only "token" payments were collected. But later on a review by the province chief of the financial conditions of Khanh Hau resulted in the reestablishment of the regular fee system for 1959.

The Record System for Village Revenues

The revenue record system found in Khanh Hau can be divided into three steps leading up to the point of the preparation of periodic reports. The first step involved recording the revenue in general receipts books, which like all of the others, was a printed publication of the province. The second concerned the making of an entry in special records; and the third, an entry in a cash receipts and expenditure journal.

For the receipt procedure--the first step--it was somewhat surprising to note that two separate records were employed especially since they were identical, with the exception that one was the "Receipts for the Village Budget" and the other for the provincial and central governments. Having two parallel records meant that two separate receipts and reports were prepared almost every time a tax payment was made since village taxes were attached as surcharges to all province and central government taxes.

The Timing of Revenue Payments

This analysis was suggested by a more limited examination of the pattern of rice field tax payments studied relative to the problem of tax delinquencies discussed in the next chapter. In that examination it was found that tax payments were being made fairly regularly throughout the year rather than on or by any particular date or deadline. This was surprising largely because it contrasted with American patterns of last-minute

rushes to meet tax deadlines. This present analysis shows the general pattern of monthly revenue payments in Khanh Hau. It provides answers to such questions as the peak months, the height of the peaks, the variations in trends among the different sources, and the time of the year by which the village received over one-half of its annual revenues.

Monthly Totals. According to Figure 9B the peak periods of revenue payments of all types occurred in the month of May for two years and in June for one year. This suggests some tendency for payments to be concentrated; however, the height of these peaks never exceeded 35o/o and the average height for the three years was much less, about 25 percent, since in 1956 the peak was about 18 percent and in 1958, 22 percent. As no single month enjoyed an exceptionally high peak, it may be of some value to note the patterns of the three months at both extremes in proportions of payments, that is, the three months of highest and lowest proportions of payments during each of these years. This pattern can be seen in the following figures.

Khanh Hau Village Cash Revenue Payments

	1956	1957	1958
Highest proportions: "H"	May 17.6o/o Aug. 13.7 Oct. 11.6	June 35.1o/o Oct. 14.7 Dec. 9.5	May 22.0o/o Dec. 16.2 Sept. 8.5
Lowest proportions: "L"	Sept. 1.1o/o July 2.9 Nov. 5.2	Jan. 0.7o/o Aug. 1.4 May 2.2	June 1.4o/o Nov. 4.7 July 5.3

And this in turn, when shown more graphically, indicates some contrast between the earlier and later months of each year.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1956				H		L	H	L	H	L		
1957	L			L	H				H			H
1958				H		L	L	H		L		H

With the exception of January, 1957, none of the extremes ("H" for highest and "L" for lowest) came within the first

Figure 9B

Khanh Hau Village Revenues for 1956, 1957 and 1958*
By monthly percentage of annual totals

Monthly Percentage

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Totals
1956	6.8	6.6	10.6	7.9	17.6	7.8	2.9	13.7	1.1	11.6	5.2	7.9	99.7%
1957	0.7	7.9	7.0	3.4	2 2	35.1	6.8	1.4	6.7	14.7	4.5	9.5	99.9
1958	5.4	5.7	7.9	7.8	22.0	1.4	5.3	6.8	8.5	7.3	4.7	16.2	99.0

Cumulative percentage

1956	6.8	13.4	24.0	31.9	49.5	57.3	60.2	73.9	75.0	86.6	91.8	99.7
1957	0.7	8.6	15.6	19.0	21.2	56.3	63.1	64.5	71.2	85.9	90.4	99.9
1958	5.4	11.1	19.0	26.8	48.8	50.2	55.5	62.3	70.8	78.1	82.8	99.0

* Loans and subventions were omitted. Actual cash totals exclusive of loans and subventions were: 1956 : 55,368$
1957 47,642
1958 27,475

Source: see Appendix "B".

four months of the year. Those, in other words, were more or less average months for revenue payments. The above average months, on the other hand, were spread throughout the remaining months--no plateau as such of revenue payment existed. While the month of May is the most important month--having the most payments in two out of thr three years--July and November shared the position of least importance. For two years both of these were included in the months of lowest proportions.

Monthly Totals by Source. Figure 10 (a somewhat difficult table to read) provides a more detailed description of the time patterns for the various sources of revenue. Each source must be examined separately.

The various tax surcharges were due at the beginning of the year; however, tax collections typically did not begin until March or April, and extended into the following year. Thus, the data presented in Figure 9B undoubtedly includes delinquent as well as current revenues. Because of this mixture of current and past taxes it was not possible to obtain a fully satisfactory understanding of the surcharge tax payment patterns; still there are some observations that can enrich the understanding of the financial situation in this one small village.

The tendency for tax collection to be prolonged is well illustrated by the rice field tax data, which show, for example, that payments were received in 32 of the 36 months reported. Furthermore, most of the monthly totals were relatively small--no major concentration of payments occurred. The greatest proportion was found in June, 1956--amounting to 36 percent of the annual total. In the other two years, however, no single month was credited with more than 20 per cent. For the most part the revenue came in small doses. The data also show that the peaks of payments, in addition to being low, were not constant from year to year. In 1956 June was the major month, but in 1957, February, and in 1958, at the other extreme, December. Never before July or August was at least one-half of the total revenues for the year received. Generally the larger payments were made in the last five months.

In general, the garden plot tax had a similar pattern--that is, payments spread throughout most months, no major peaks, no consistency in location of the peaks, and in two of the three years the location of the mid-point in annual collections fell in the last half of the year.

Figure 10

[ ] = peak amount

= = mid-point in annual revenue

Khanh-Hau Village Revenues for 1956, 1957, 1958.
By Source and Monthly Percentage of Annual Total

Source		Jan. %	Feb. %	Mar. %	Apr. %	May %	June %	July %	Aug. %	Sept %	Oct. %	Nov. %	Dec. %
Tax Surcharges													
Rice fields													
2,293$	1956	3.2	-	-	3.2	-	[36.2]	5.8	15.2	15.6	5.1	13.0	2.7
1,716$	1957	-	[14.7]	9.5	4.8	5.5	8.6	7.7	14.2	6.6	8.4	10.7	9.3
4,183$	1958	6.3	5.0	11.9	10.5	6.7	2.1	3.1	6.1	8.7	7.2	12.2	[20.2]
Garden plots													
406$	1956	3.9	-	-	-	-	25.4	7.6	11.8	3.2	2.0	[32.3]	13.8
310$	1957	-	[17.5]	10.0	[17.5]	11.3	-	4.8	8.1	0.6	2.6	16.6	11.0
653$	1958	4.0	-	6.3	8.7	11.5	3.7	-	10.7	-	5.8	10.7	[38.6]
House and Sites													
48$	1956	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.6	[56.2]	-	-	29.2	-
69$	1957	-	20.3	-	-	-	-	-	20.3	-	-	[59.4]	-
251$	1958	-	-	21.5	-	13.5	-	-	-	-	16.3	21.5	[27.2]
Licenses													
2,447$	1956	4.4	-	-	[62.6]	-	-	-	12.1	[6.6]	8.6	5.7	-
1,459$	1957	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	[69.8]	18.7	11.5	-
738$	1958	-	[58.5]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16.9	24.6	-
Animals													
190$	1956	15.8	2.6	2.6	-	10.5	10.5	-	[39.5]	-	5.3	13.2	-
2,055$	1957	-	17.6	[37.6]	9.7	13.6	1.9	1.2	3.9	2.4	-	2.9	10.2
5,145$	1958	0.6	-	21.8	18.9	6.0	[4.7]	1.7	4.1	1.7	-	9.3	31.2

(next page)

Figure 10. Page 2

Khanh-Hau Village Cash Revenues for 1956, 1957 and 1958

Source		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Village Property													
Rice fields													
46,105$	1956	7.1	7.6	12.3	5.6	20.3	6.5	2.8	14.7	-	12.9	2.8	7.4
21,415$	1957	1.4	9.7	-	-	0.9	75.2	10.7	-	-	1.4	0.7	-
14,010$	1958	8.0	4.6	2.4	-	36.5	-	8.9	7.0	13.0	10.7	-	8.9
Garden plots													
306$	1956	-	-	-	-	6.5	-	-	-	-	-	93.5	-
422	1957	-	50.0	-	50.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1,160	1958	-	5.2	-	42.7	-	-	-	31.5	6.0	-	-	14.6
Other Sources Fines													
209$	1956	2.4	3.7	22.7	-	19.0	-	-	-	-	-	42.7	9.5
400$	1957	-	10.0	27.5	7.5	-	-	22.5	-	-	-	32.5	-
260$	1958	-	23.1	-	23.1	30.6	-	-	-	-	11.6	11.6	-
Fees													
2,981$	1956	1.5	4.7	3.6	5.2	10.9	12.3	5.9	4.5	2.7	4.2	17.1	27.4
10,805$	1957	0.5	7.2	11.4	9.6	4.3	4.0	6.4	3.0	18.9	11.9	12.3	10.5
1,030$	1958	-	17.6	13.6	13.6	21.3	3.9	-	1.0	-	-	-	29.1
Loans and subventions													
—	1956	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
37,550$	1957	-	-	2.7	-	-	-	-	45.7	-	13.3	30.3	8.0
61,200$	1958	2.0	-	21.2	-	-	32.7	16.3	-	-	-	-	27.8

Source: see Appendix "B".

Little needs to be said about the house and house site taxes since the total payments were extremely small--48¢ to 251¢. It might be noted, however, that the payments were fairly well concentrated toward the close of the year.

For the license revenues the characteristic of inconsistency appears especially pronounced with the peak months being April in 1956, September in 1957, and February in 1958. Almost of equal significance were the relatively large portions of the payments represented by these peaks, in comparison with the patterns for the other revenues. All three years contained concentrations amounting to not less than 58 percent.

Again a pattern similar to that for rice field revenues was found in the animal tax revenues. Tax payments were made throughout the year and the concentrations were low although somewhat higher than those for the rice fields. A definite lack of consistency in peak periods was evident although this might have been caused by the major increase in the number of animals as a result of the governmental program in 1957 to extend loans for purchasing both buffaloes and oxen.

In contrast to the tax revenues, the revenues from the village-owned properties--especially for the more important type of property, the fields rented to villagers--showed a fairly consistent pattern and a definite tendency to attain a mid-point before the middle of the year. One might offer the observation that the village officials appeared far more interested in making these collections than in those for the tax surcharges. The highest peak for any of the revenues during any of the years occurred in the public rice field revenues in 1957, but such a concentration was not found in 1958, which suggest that some exceptional reason must have caused the flurry of payments in June 1957.

The revenues from the garden plot rentals were extremely low except for the last year. To the extent that a pattern can be seen, it can be said that apparently no consistent policy had been enforced, for the concentration of payments varied greatly from year to year.

Unlike the various tax surcharges and property rentals the other revenue sources were not susceptible to planned administration or enforcement. Thus, the analysis of their peaks and concentrations, etc., does not carry the same meaning. However, it is at least educational to note the timing of these payments.

As one might have anticipated fee revenues came fairly slowly but continuously throughout 1956, 1957, and the first half of 1958. However, from July, 1958, to December, income was reported for only one month, August, and the amount represented only one percent of the annual total. There was a strong tendency for fee payments to be concentrated toward the closing months--in the first two years the midpoint in annual collections did not occur until September and in 1958, although the mid-point came earlier, the greatest concentration occurred in the final month, December. The loans and subventions came more sporadically than other revenues. For 1957, three months accounted for 89 percent of these payments and for 1958, four months accounted for 98 percent. The timing of these payments depended upon several factors, of course: the condition of local funds, the processing of the request for aid, and the actual payments. Payments received in August, 1957, might have been needed for charges incurred several months before. Generally these funds paid over-due salaries of council members.

The Pattern of Expenditures

Khanh Hau had not been burdened with a complex pattern of expenditures. As the following data show, most of the expenditures were for fairly clear-cut and stable objects, such as salaries of council members, stationery, travel, and gasoline or kerosene for lanterns in the Village Hall and Barracks. Interspersed were an assortment of items such as a meat inspection stamp and materials for the village anti-communist denunciation committee.

The Objects of Expenditures

Figure 11 reproduces fairly closely the actual reports made about expenditures in Khanh Hau. Unfortunately, it gives only a limited perspective of the nature of village expenditures. It does tell the following:

	1958 Expenditures		
Object	Personnel	Other	Total
General administration	77,589$	5,928$	83,517$
Common interest	-	1,451	1,451
Unanticipated	-	2,650	2,650
	77,589$	10,029$	87,618$

Figure 11

Khanh-Hau Village Expenditures -- Budgeted and Reported for 1956, 1957 and 1958

	1956		1957		1958	
I. General Administration	Budgeted	Reported	Budgeted	Reported	Budgeted	Reported
A. Personnel						
1. Village council	50,798$	--	20,798$	28,626$	57,300$	43,269$
2. Village clerk	--	9,030	--	10,920	11,000	10,920
3. Hamlet chiefs	--	--	--	--	21,600	16,200
4. Laborers, messengers, orderlies	18,546	18,545	36,840	15,840	7,200	7,200
Total	69,344$	27,575$	57,638$	55,386$	97,100	77,589$
B. Other						
1. Stationery	1,200$	2,580$	1,200$	1,374$	1,200$	1,378$
2. Office equipment	--	1,216	--	--	3,500	--
3 Lighting	1,320	1,320	1,320	1,425	1,500	1,320
4. Ceremonies	--	3,371	--	2,160	1,000	500
5. Travel	600	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,730
6. Village assessment for mutual assistance fund	989	--	989	--	1,000	--
7. Miscellaneous	--	--	--	--	2,300	--
Total	4,109$	10,887$	5,909$	7,359$	12,900$	5,928$
II. Social affairs						
A. Personnel						
1. School, hospitals, health	--	--	--	3,000$	[illegible]	--
B. Other						
1. School equipment	--	100$	--	--	2,000$	--
2. Subsidies	--	500$	--	--	--	--
3. Welfare aid	--	--	--	--	700	--
4. Burial fees for the poor	--	--	--	--	300	--
Total	--	600$	--	3,000$	3,000$	--
III. Public Works						
A. Maintenance of Village office	--	--	--	--	2,000$	--
Total	--	--	--	--	2,000$	--

(continued)

Figure 11, page 2

Khanh-Hau Village Expenditures -- Budgeted and Reported for 1956, 1957 and 1958

	1956 Budgeted	1956 Reported	1957 Budgeted	1957 Reported	1958 Budgeted	1958 Reported
IV. Common Interest						
A. Personnel						
1. Canton Secretary	--	4,551$	--	1,755$	--	--
2. Canton Messenger	--	4,230	--	1,278	--	--
Total	--	8,781$	--	3,033$	--	--
B. Other						
1. Military equipment	--	1,120$	--	516$	--	1,451$
Total	--	1,120$	--	516$	--	1,451$
V. Unanticipated and unclassified						
A. Unanticipated	119$	--	321$	--	5,000$	2,650$
B. Unclassified						
1. Information agents	--	9,600$	--	5,400$	--	--
2. Self-guard travel and special costs	--	1,475	--	--	--	--
3. Youth training	--	1,200	--	--	--	--
4. Elections	--	315	--	--	--	--
5. Communist denunciation committee	--	223	--	--	--	--
6. "Extra expenditures"	--	2,000	--	1,820	--	--
Total	--	14,813$	--	7,220$	--	--
Grand totals	73,572$	63,776$	63,868$	76,514$	120,000$	87,618$

Source: Village budget and expenditure records. Budget data were obtained from files of provincial headquarters in Tan-An.

This summary clearly points up the large proportion of expenditures for personnel in contrast to material and the even greater proportion charged to what the provincial administrators consider "general administration." According to the above figures, about 90 percent of the expenditures were for personnel, that is, for salaries, and about 95 per cent for general administration which obviously is such a large classification that it becomes almost meaningless. The expenditures identified as "common interest," a term taken from the formal budget document, were for clothing for the village self-guard. In earlier years this classification had included the contributions of the village for the maintenance of the canton secretary and messenger.

Figure 12 presents a more informative scheme prepared by the writer for reporting expenditures in Khanh Hau. An attempt was made to arrange the data according to the specific function for which the expenditures were made. In part the tabulations were based on actual expenditures and in part on computed costs, assuming a constant rate throughout a 12-month period. The computed expenditures were village council salaries based on the rates reported as of October 1, 1958, at which time some major raises were granted by the national government. These were combined with non-personnel costs, materials and travel, actually reported for the year 1958. Some allocations had to be made on an almost arbitrary basis--for example, various costs listed in 1958 for stationery and lighting were assumed to have been shared equally by all five council positions. Thus, one-fifth of the amount, 5,928$ shown in Figure 11, paragraph IB, was assigned to each council position. The salary of the clerk was also pro-rated but partly on a less arbitrary basis. The clerk had estimated for the writer that he generally spent about one-half of his work day on the financial affairs; hence, one-half of his salary was assigned to financial administration and the remainder, to the other four positions with a double weight being given to his administrative workload for the Village Chief and the Hamlet Chiefs. To clarify further the expenditure pattern, some changes were made in budget classification and organizational terminology--for example, expenditures for the information program were combined with those for public ceremonies to establish the function of "Public Information and Ceremonies." As a result of these adjustments, however, a clearer perspective of the allocation of financial resources in the village was obtained. The following summary of Figure 12 further facilitates getting this more informative view.

Figure 12

Pattern of Annual Expenditures for Khanh-Hau Village -- By Major Functions

Based on October, 1958 salry levels and 1958 operating costs.

I.	General Administration				
	A. Personnel				
	1. Village chief	18,000$			
	2. Hamlet chiefs (6)	21,600			
	3. Village clerk (1/4)	2,730			
	4. Housekeeping	7,200	49,530$		
	B. Materials and travel		1,085$	50,615$	39.8%
II.	Justice and security				
	A. Personnel				
	1. Village police chief	22,800$			
	2. Village clerk (1/16)	680	23,480$		
	B. Other costs				
	1. Supplies for guard	1,451$			
	2. Other materials and travel	1,085	2,536$	26,016$	20.5%
III.	Financial Administration				
	A. Personnel				
	1. Village financial secretary	13,200$			
	2. Village clerk (1/2)	5,460	18,660$		
	B. Materials and travel		1,085	19,745$	15.8%
IV.	Social and Economic Affairs				
	A. Personnel				
	1. Village deputy chief	12,200$			
	2. Village clerk (1/16)	683	12,883$		
	B. Other costs				
	1. District meeting for clean-up committees	250$			
	2. Other travel and meterials	1,085	1,335$	14,218$	11.2%

(continued)

Figure 12, page 2

V. Registrations and Certificates				
A. Personnel				
1. Civil status officer	7,200$			
2. Village clerk (1/16)	683	7,883$		
B. Materials and travel		724	8,607$	6.8%
VI. Public Information and Ceremonies				
A. Personnel				
1. Information agent	3,600$			
2. Village clerk (1/16)	693	4,283$		
B. Other costs				
1. Travel of villagers to ceremonies	1,700$			
2. Transportation of Public Opinion Boxes	130			
3. Preparation of signs	170			
4. Other materials and travel	361	2,361$	6,644	5.2%
VII. Miscellaneous				
Ceremonies	500$			
Military draft	300			
Meat inspection stamp	100		900	0.7%
Total for the year			127,181$	100.0%

Source: Salary data received from interview with police chief of Khanh-Hau, 15 Sept 58 and other data as shown in Figure 11.

Note : Allocation of salary of village clerk was made on the basis of an interview in which he indicated that about one-half of his time work-day is assigned to village finance. The other half was arbitrarily pro-rated equally among the other four village officials. Likewise various general administrative costs identified above usually as "materials and travel" were arbitrarily divided among the five council members with the share for the civil status councillor being further divided in recognition of his dual position, serving also as Information Agent.

Pattern of Khanh Hau Village Annual Expenditures

Major function	Personnel	Other	Total	Percent
I. General Administration	49,530$	1,085$	50,615$	39.8o/o
II. Justice and Security	23,480	2,536	26,016	20.5
III. Finance Administration	18,660	1,085	19,745	15.8
IV. Social and Economic Affairs	12,883	1,335	14,218	11.2
V. Registrations and Certificates	7,883	724	8,607	6.8
VI. Public Information and Ceremonies	4,283	2,361	6,644	5.2
VII. Miscellaneous	-	900	900	0.7
	116,719$	10,026$	126,745$	100.0o/o

Even though for these computations several of the services in the village were separated from the broad category of "general administration," it is apparent that about 40 per cent of the expenditures remained in that classification. As shown in Figure 12, the major items for this were the salaries of the Village and Hamlet Chiefs. It is true that some additional paring could have been made by further refining the data--for example, hamlet chiefs devoted considerable time (considerable that is, in proportion to the few hours given each week to hamlet affairs) to working with the village Chief of Police and the Self-Defense Guard.

Next to general administration in importance was the function of justice and security. Apart from the salary costs for Police Chief and Village Clerk, the major expenditure in this function was the monthly purchase of flashlight batteries to be used by the self-guard.

Finance administration ranked third, accounting for about 16 percent of the annual expenditures. This included the salary of the Financial Councillor and one-half the cost of the Village Clerk, who devoted about one-half time to financial procedures. The remainder, about 25 percent, of the expenditures accounted for the activities covered by the functions of social and economic affairs, registrations and certificates, public information and ceremonies, and miscellaneous matters which included one small item that might have been classified as "public health"--a meat inspection stamp.

Even with this revised expenditure report the financial records do not depict the full character of the village administrative operations as one can observe them in the village. Two important activities have not been included--the village Self-Guard and the kindergarten. They were omitted since their financing had not been integrated with the other village expenditures; the district had been paying both costs directly. It may be difficult, of course, to determine where to draw the line between village activities and higher level activities when there is interest in attempting to point a realistic financial picture. Here the line has been drawn to include all governmental personnel, other than those in the educational service, whose primary task was working in Khanh Hau village and who were for at least some purposes under the supervision of the Village Council. This definition permits including the Self-Guard which was supervised by the Police Chief and the kindergarten which was not considered as part of the educational service and was supervised by the Village Chief, and to exclude all others. In other words, with this can be shown a financial pattern for all village administration activities rather than for just those whose finances have been made part of the formal budget document.

To develop, then, an even more realistic report the following adjustments were made: 1) An increase of 192,000$ in the Justice and Security function based on: 16 self-guard at 900$ per month, plus about 10,000$ for other expenses attributable to the self-guard, plus a pro-rata share of 10,000$ for cost of the hamlet chiefs helping with security and justice activities. 2) An additional function - education - with an estimated expenditure of 10,000$; 3) an off-setting decrease of 10,000$ in the general administrative function because of the division of expenditures for the Hamlet Chiefs.

As a result, Figure 13, which the writer views as portraying more accurately the existing administrative program under Village Council control, points up the heavy public investment in the functions of Justice and Security. In this analysis 68o/o of the expenditures was for these functions (and actually almost all for Security), while as shown in Figure 12, only 20o/o was expended for this function. Among the other changes, the drop in the proportion for General Administration stands out. This was facilitated by transferring some of the salary payments for hamlet chiefs to the security function since they assist the Police Chief. In the opinion of the writer Figure 13 provides a more realistic picture of village expenditure patterns.

Figure 13

An Estimated Annual Expenditure Pattern For
Activities Under Khanh Hau Village Council Supervision

			(Fig. 12)
General Administration	40,600$	12.7o/o	(39.8o/o)
Justice and Security	218,000	68.4	(20.5o/o)
Financial Administration	19,800	6.2	(15.8o/o)
Social and Economic Affairs	14,200	4.5	(11.2o/o)
Education	10,000	3.1	--
Registrations and Certificates	8,600	2.7	(6.8o/o)
Public Information and Ceremonies	6,600	2.1	(5.2o/o)
Miscellaneous	900	0.3	(0.7o/o)
Total	318,700$	100.0o/o	(127,181$)

The Expenditure System

The general administrative framework within which expenditures were made by the Village Council was based on one simple rule--any expenditure exceeding 200$ must be approved in advance by higher authorities, either the District or the Province Chief depending upon the amount. Whether the item had been inserted in the budget document did not seem to be a major matter of concern--the crucial test was the attitude of the higher authorities toward specific items.

Within this framework, so long as cash was available, either in the Village Hall (a maximum of 2,000$ could be retained and at times the maximum could be exceeded if some major payments had to be made shortly) or in the provincial treasury, the expenditure system operated without any problems. For the great bulk of payments--largely, the salaries of the village officials--vouchers had to be submitted through the customary channel of the District Chief to the Province Chief. The return of the approved voucher provided the authorization for making the payments either from the village cash or from the treasury office in the provincial headquarters. Smaller items, such as the monthly consumption of illuminating gas and stationery, were purchased directly from the vendors with the Council receiving either a signed receipt or certifying as to the amount and purpose of the cash purchase.

According to the Deputy Chief, as a matter of form, even purchases less than 200$ required a specific approval of the District Chief. The difference was that the request did not need to be approved before making the purchase. But even when payments had already been made, the request was still submitted as if prior approval were being sought.

Disruptions and delays occurred whenever the Village became short of funds. This affected the Village in at least two ways. First, Village Council salaries had to be paid irregularly rather than monthly. According to the Deputy Chief, at times funds also would be lacking to pay even the clerk and laborer--but since these workers were the vital "arms" of the village administration, the Village Council members would finance the monthly payments from their own funds, reimbursing themselves once the Province had granted a loan or subvention. The other type of disruption came from higher authorities. Occasionally the village, as part of its participation in some activity directed from above, such as the preparation of a ceremony at provincial headquarters, would be ordered to spend its funds for some unbudgeted purpose, such as travel of villagers to the ceremony. If funds were available, this could be done without any difficulties. However, at least on one

occasion in recent months, January, 1957, the Village received an order to pay 8,000$(for self-guard uniforms) when it had only 6 piasters in its village funds. At that time it was necessary for the Village Chief to notify the Province Chief that the necessary funds were lacking. In his letter he also pointed out that the Village lacked funds even to pay the council salaries. (This illustration suggests that the provincial administrators were not well informed about village financial status. But also the order passed through the District--was it also unaware of Khanh Hau's financial condition? According to the Village Deputy Chief, even though the District did know, as a matter of procedure it forwarded the letter so that the Village could make the reply--time, apparently, was not a crucial factor.)

Even though lacking in financial resources, the Village was not lacking in reports and records. Directly related to the expenditure reporting system were two journals: "The Daily Journal of the Budget," and "The Daily Journal of Receipts and Expenditures." But these titles were misleading. The first, the "Daily Journal of the Budget," was in fact a summary daily cash journal of receipts and expenditures, while the second, although titled a "daily", was employed only once a month for recording the itemized expenditures and relating them to the original budget categories (but not to the budgeted items as such).

The "Daily Journal of the Budget," an extremely thick volume of 400 numbered pages and signed at the beginning and end by the District Chief: "... for the province chief," contained only summary entries, such as: "January 10. Tax collections...60$." Its major feature was a running balance of cash on hand. Emphasizing the "daily" aspect of this journal was the custom of making an entry even when no transactions had occurred.

The most unusual feature of the entire expenditure system was the use of the other daily journal, the "Journal of Receipts and Expenditures." In actual use this was a monthly rather than a daily book of record. The existence of this practice was discovered by noticing the unusual sequence of entries--the first entry, for example, for a month usually bore the date of the last day of the month while other entries would have earlier dates and those were not necessarily even in a reverse chronological sequence.

Prior to 1958 this monthly statement of expenditures was written in an ordinary notebook. According to the Clerk--and as observed by the interpreter--the Village Council members once a month would confer as to what expenditures had been

made. When the interpreter observed this conference, it appeared to him that "hot arguments" went on most of the day; unfortunately he could not determine the basis of the debates.

Customarily after an agreement had been reached, the Clerk compiled the various notes and recorded them in the notebook. The practice of monthly meetings remained, even though a new, a daily journal record had been substituted for the notebook.

The Expenditures by Month, 1956 to 1958

Some additional appreciation of the pattern of expenditures in Khanh Hau can be gained from examining the financial data on a monthly basis as presented in Figures 14 to 16. In combination these enable tracing the pattern for different items throughout a period of 36 months. This gives some insight regarding both the stability and the change in the village's financial pattern.

A major pattern is the sporadic payment of Village Council salaries during 1958. By the end of the year the Councillors had become accustomed to going several months without any payments; lump payments would then be received. Similarly Hamlet Chiefs, whose salaries began in 1958, received periodic payments. In contrast, however, wages for the clerical personnel were paid regularly. As has been explained this regularity was probably maintained by voluntary payments from the private funds of the Councillors (although the records indicate that the payments came through normal channels).

Apart from the addition of the Hamlet Chiefs to the monthly payroll, the most significant personnel change indicated by the monthly payments was the elimination of the expenditures for the canton secretary and messenger. These payments stopped early in 1957 and the appointment of a new canton chief in 1958 did not reactivate the village contributions for canton personnel. Perhaps, this was due to a suggestion made by the Khanh Hau Village officials that, as a means for lessening the financial burden on the Village, the cost of canton personnel should be shifted either to other villages or to the Province.

On the basis of these three Figures it is evident that many of the minor expenditures became regularized and standardized. Stationery and lighting appeared regularly each month as charges of 100$ and 110$ each. Travel, likewise, was almost constant, although it gradually increased from 200$ to 230$.

Figure 14

Khanh-Hau Village Expenditures -- 1956

Object	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
- Council	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
- Clerk	352	1048	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	1120	910	9,030
- Hamlet Chiefs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
- Laborers	1690	2153	1422	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1920	1560	18,545
- Stationery	50	150	100	300	100	1280	100	100	100	100	100	100	2,580
- Office equipment	--	--	--	--	--	1180	--	--	--	36	--	--	1,216
- Lighting	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	1,320
- Ceremonies	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3371	--	--	3,371
- Travel	50	350	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	2,400
- Canton secretary	198	334	266	266	266	266	400	400	400	400	770	585	4,551
- Canton messenger	328	328	328	328	328	328	328	328	328	328	524	426	4,230
- Self-guard	--	--	--	--	1120	--	--	--	--	515	960	--	2,595
- Information agent	--	--	--	3600	1200	1200	600	600	600	600	600	600	9,600
- Youth programs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	200	1000	1,200
- Education	--	--	--	--	100	--	500	--	--	--	--	--	600
- Election lists	--	--	--	315	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	315
- Extra expenditures	--	--	--	--	2000	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2,000
- Communist denunciation committee	--	--	--	--	--	223	--	--	--	--	--	--	223
	2778$	4473$	3126$	7219$	5524$	6664$	4338$	3838$	3838$	7760$	6504$	5491$	63,776$

Source: Cash disbursements journal in Khanh-Hau Village Hall.

Figure 15

Khanh-Hau Village Expenditures -- 1957

Object	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
- Council	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9542	4771	4771	4771	4771	28,626
- Clerk	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	10,920
- Hamlet Chiefs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
- Laborers	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	600	600	600	15,840
- Stationery	100	100	100	100	100	100	169	100	100	100	205	100	1,374
- Office equipment	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
- Lighting	110	110	205	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	1,425
- Ceremonies	--	--	--	--	--	2000	160	--	--	--	--	--	2,160
- Travel	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	2,400
- Canton secretary	585	585	--	585	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,755
- Canton messenger	426	426	--	426	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,278
- Self-guard	60	--	--	--	--	96	60	60	60	60	60	60	516
- Information agent	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	--	--	--	5,400
- First aid agent	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3000	3,000
- Military	--	--	--	200	--	1050	--	--	120	--	--	--	1,370
- Travel for Elders	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	450[a]	450
	4551$	4491$	3585$	4691$	3480$	6626$	3769$	13082$	8431$	6751$	6856$	10201$	76,514$

a. For Elders to attend a graduation ceremony of a training program of leadership training for women and youth at the district headquarters.

Source: Cash disbursements journal on file in Khanh-Hau Village Hall.

Figure 16

Khanh Hau Village Expenditures — 1958

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
- Village council	--	--	9542	--	--	14314	9542	--	--	--	--	9871	43.269
- Clerk	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	10,920
- Hamlet chiefs	--	--	3600	--	--	5400	--	--	--	--	--	7200	16,200
- Laborers	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	7,200
- Stationery	100	100	100	178	100	100	100	200	100	100	100	100	1,378
- Office equipment	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
- Lighting	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	1,320
- Ceremonies	--	--	--	--	400	--	--	--	100	--	--	--	500
- Travel	200	200	200	200	240	240	240	250	250	250	230	230	2,730
- Self-guard	60	60	60	60	60	60	211	60	60	60	360	340	1,451
- Travel for villagers	1200[a]	--	--	--	250[b]	--	500[c]	--	--	--	--	--	1,950
- Public Opinion Boxes	--	130	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	130
- Information	--	--	--	--	170	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	170
- Meat Inspection Stamp	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	100	100
- Military	--	--	--	--	--	300[d]	--	--	--	--	--	--	300
	3180$	2110$	15122$	2058$	2840$	22034$	12213$	2130$	2130$	2030$	2310$	19461$	87,618$

a. to attend ceremony at district headquarters for President Diem
b. to attend "Internal Clean-Up Study Course"
c. to attend Double Seven Ceremony at province headquarters
d. travel costs for draftees

Source: Cash disbursement journal in Khanh-Hau Village Hall.

With the exception of the Information Agent and Self-Guard payments, the remaining items were intermittent at best. Up to September, 1957, the Village contained two Information Agents--the Police Chief and one other. The salary for the former was integrated with the regular expenditures for the Village Council members. Not shown in these payments was the transfer of responsibilities and of salary from the Police Chief to the Civil Status Councillor which occurred in 1958. The Self-Guard monthly payment of 60$ beginning in 1957 was for the purchase of flashlight batteries.

The remaining, more or less "ad hoc," expenditures are also interesting to examine for the information they offer. With a few minor exceptions, all of these were based on specific authorizations either of the Province or District chiefs. These will be examined by month beginning with April, 1956.

On the basis of a district order issued in the preceding month, the Village expended 315$ for the preparation of election lists for the national assembly election held during the preceding month. In May, again on the basis of district orders, the Village expended 1120$ to purchase hats and shoes for the Self-Guard, and 100$ to change the seal of the elementary school. Unexplained in the village "notebook" of expenditures was a 2,000$ expenditure, except for a statement citing the number of the provincial authorization. In June, without any specific authorization being cited, the Village reported an expenditure of 223$ for materials to be used by the village communist denunciation committee. In July, on the basis of a district order, the Village gave the primary school 500$ to purchase prizes to be awarded at the close of the school year. In October a total of 3,371$ was expended for three ceremonies--2,000$ on order of the Province Chief for the annual ceremony at the tomb of Marshall Nguyen Huynh Duc; 575$ by a district order for the welcoming of the "Korean Delegation," which visited the Village; and 796$, without any specific order being cited, for feeding a housing inspection delegation." Travel allowances for Self-Guard or Self-Defense personnel to attend ceremonies in an adjoining province accounted for 515$. In November, 960$ were paid to the Self-Defense personnel as an allowance for attending an Independence Day celebration at the district town, and 200$ to the village soccer team captain for attending a youth rally in a neighboring community--both a province and a district order covered this authorization. In December, again on the basis of a district order, 1,000$ were paid to two villagers attending a youth training course for ten days in the province town.

With the exception of a large, 3,000$, payment for the first aid agent, the pattern of expenditures for 1957 followed fairly closely that for the preceding year. In April the district authorized an expenditure of 200$ for a banner welcoming some army representatives to the village. In June another military event was financed: 1,050$ for transportation of draftees. Also in June a major ceremony--the inauguration of the newly dug canal--accounted for 2,000$ on order of the province chief. Another ceremony the following month--Double Seven day--consumed 160$ used for painting eight banners in the village. A lunch served to a civil guard artist group in September accounted for 120$; in December 450$ provided for the travel of village elders to a ceremony held in the district town at the close of a training program for women and youth leaders. The lump payment of 3,000$ to the village first aid agent completed the year's pattern of miscellaneous expenditures.

Again in January, 1958, villagers were transported to a Presidential ceremony at the district headquarters. This amounted to 1,200$. In February, 130$ was expended for building and painting five public opinion boxes to be posted throughout the hamlets. Three months later 250$ was spent to cover travel costs of heads of the Five-Family groups, Hamlet Chiefs, members of the village youth executive committee, and the Village Council to district headquarters to attend an "Internal Clean-up" study course; 400$ for a farewell party for draftees; and 170$ for banners about the governmental declaration regarding reunification with North Viet Nam. In June 300$ paid travel costs of the draftees and in July 500$ paid travel costs of villagers to the Double Seven Ceremony in the province town. From July on, special expenditures decreased greatly. An expenditure of 100$ in September for gifts for poor children on the occasion of the Mid-Autum Festival and 100$ in December for a meat inspection stamp completed the miscellaneous payments for the year.

Reports and Audits

In view of the limited role of self-government in Khanh Hau it was not surprising to see the systematic and frequent check made on village financial activities. These checks can be grouped into three time periods--the month, the quarter, and the year. From a rather general review of the various records it appears that the major review was the quarterly check which involved the provincial as well as the district offices and which was based on the most elaborate reporting form. Herein the examination has been limited to describing the major documents that provided the basis for these financial over-sights and the processes to which they were submitted.

Monthly Reviews. Following the close of every month several records were prepared and carried to the District Chief for his review. What may be called the basic records were the two receipt books in which all cash receipts were itemized by payee and by object, and the cash disbursement journal in which were listed each of the disbursements along with necessary supporting data, such as the authorization, the amount, and the object. These books were closed monthly with each closing followed by a certification of approval signed by the District Chief. Once the records had been reviewed, a letter was sent to the Village requesting a messenger to come for them. All of this usually seemed to be accomplished within three or four days so that the absence of the records, especially of the receipts books, probably did not cause much inconvenience.

Also at the end of every month the Village was expected to submit various financial statements. One was an audit of the cash balance including both cash on hand and cash in the treasury. The tone of the statement indicated that as part of the audit the District Chief or whoever made the audit was expected to perform his work in the Village Hall so that he could "search the cash drawer." In practice, perhaps because of the lack of a canton chief, it had become customary for this form to be submitted along with the other records for review at district headquarters. The form called for information about both the national and provincial tax collections and status of the collections and the village collections. Money in the village had to be reported by size of banknotes; the auditor had to certify that he had advised the village officials of the maximum amounts to be kept on hand (The statement appeared out-of-date in this respect, citing a provincial decision of 1921 limiting cash that could be retained in the village to 1/6 of the total village budget of..., the date being omitted.); and was further required to certify to a more generalized review of village records and property as indicated by the following paragraphs quoted from the audit statement:

> I have checked the sources of tax, revenues, land records, civil affairs recor , and various contract documents of the village council. I have instructed the village council to make careful arrangements in order to prevent the loss of records, to keep them at the village hall for good care to prevent them from being torn, soaked, or nibbled by rats and worms.

> I have checked the village property record and workshops, public boats, and the things renovated or newly purchased to determine validity of the disbursements. I have instructed the village council to enter into the property record those things which were not yet entered.

This statement obviously assumed an intensive audit not only of the cash but of the general financial system and property of the village; however, such a review was not being made in Khanh Hau, probably because of the lack of a canton chief to serve as an administrative assistant who could do the field work. In practice the on-site audit had been changed to a centralized audit made at the district headquarters.

The other two forms submitted monthly contained less detail. One was a summary statement of receipts and expenditures plus cash on hand and cash on deposit. On this form both the current and preceding months must be reported. The other, which was merely a letter rather than a printed form, reported the totals of the provincial and village tax collections.

Quarterly Reviews. Every three months the village was required to submit a receipts and expenditure report to the provincial administration. This report consisted of an elaborate 12-page printed document supplied by the province. It served as a means for both an administrative as well as a financial review.

In the section on village expenditures, data for the following items had to be included; the type of expenditure (village council, clerical assistance, etc.), the proposed expenditure, the amount approved, the amount spent in previous months, the amount spent during the present quarter, and the total spent. On the far right side space was provided for explanatory remarks to be made either by the village council or by the auditor. And both had employed the column--the council elaborated on the purpose of some miscellaneous expenditures and the auditor commented on how to correct the entries, changing one item, for example, from ceremonies to unanticipated expenditures. The earmarks of a careful review--neatly drawn red lines--were found throughout the report.

In the receipts section another series of columns sought information about the estimated revenues, the revenues collected, and the revenues still to be collected. These

amounts were subdivided into basic taxes and supplementary charges. Thus, a complete picture was presented of the proposed and actual revenues.

In the final page spaces were marked for describing collections from the supplementary taxes and explaining any unforeseen incomes and expenditures that occurred. A closing section was for comments on any authorized projects. Khanh Hau had included minor comments in the first two parts. It listed a grant from the Mutual Assistance Fund and the unanticipated cost of transporting the public opinion letter boxes to the district during two months.

Along with this quarterly report was submitted all of the vouchers supporting the expenditures. These had already been submitted on a monthly basis to the District Chief, but the provincial authorities had required them as part of this quarterly review.

Annual Reviews. At the close of the year one additional report was submitted along with the customary monthly and quarterly reports. This as yet had not reached the status of a printed form; rather it was a single-paged mimeograph statement entitled "Condition of Taxes and Revenues." Prepared by the Village Council, the report was certified and forwarded by the District to the Province.

The purpose of this report was to provide a review of the extent to which the village has been able to collect its revenues estimated for the past two years. A series of columns provided the necessary classification of data into the two preceding years--the estimated revenues, the amounts collected, and the balances. A larger column followed in which the council was expected to explain the reasons why collections had not been completed--but no such explanation was offered by Khanh Hau in the January, 1959, report.

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In this chapter the characteristics of the financial system in Khanh Hau village have been examined. For the most part this has been limited to an analysis of the official documents and records--the annual budgets, the books of revenues and expenditures, the correspondence, and the special records for tax collections. In keeping with the broad objective of this study, emphasis was placed on describing and analyzing the existing system. The chapter fairly well depicts the system, although there are some points that could have been greatly enriched by further inquiry. The discussion,

for example, on the present status of the Mutual Assistance Fund and provincial attitudes toward use of loans could have been clarified by interviewing higher authorities.

This examination by no means represents a complete survey of village financial affairs. For example, information about hamlet activities as such was not included. The hamlets, although not having official budgets, at times on an informal basis do collect and spend contributions for hamlet purposes. One illustration found in the village correspondence records was a report about the financing of the construction of an information post. An average contribution of 10 piasters was made by about 40 residents of one hamlet to cover the costs of some materials purchased by the hamlet chief (see Figure 26). The contribution pattern in general was not covered, yet it represented an important part of village financial affairs; contributions collected for the major village ceremonies probably amounted to at least twenty times the amount collected from the village surcharge on the rice field tax. After an unsuccessful preliminary attempt to obtain data about contributions--the Village Deputy Chief seemed to react strongly to the inquiry, explaining that contributions for ceremonies were not part of the governmental budget, that they were handled either by the Council or by one of the notables, and that surplus funds were held for the next ceremony--the writer chose not to pursue what appeared to be an "off-limits" subject. Three other financial activities were also omitted --the collection and handling of contributions for the reconstruction of the tomb of the famous general Nguyen Huynh Duc; the handling of contributions made by the Asia Foundation, which, although an entirely private group, processed its village financial aid through the Village Council; and the financing of the local preparations for President Diem's visit.

The reconstruction fund drive was started with the blessings and directions of the Province Chief who presumably was serving as an auditor. Funds seem to be carefully recorded. An elaborate set of receipt books had been published for use by collection agents throughout the Province and for the major contributions a Memorial Book--with all pages carefully numbered--had been established in which each donor could write his own statement. In contrast the Asia Foundation funds seemed to be under more loose control, with the village council members having some freedom in determining the use--and as a result being critized by villagers for misuse. For example, the claimed purpose of the purchase of a water pump was to earn money for supplementing the Foundation grant for a

maternity. But some village critics contended that if the rentals from the pump had not been pocketed, council members themselves were at least not paying for the use of the pump.

For financing the ceremony for President Diem, an informal arrangement was made between the District Chief and the Village Deputy Chief who supervised local arrangements: since the Village lacked funds, the Deputy Chief spent his own and, then, sometime later was reimbursed by the District Chief. The interesting administrative feature was that this village official had been authorized to spend as much as he thought necessary. In making this broad delegation the District Chief had made his justification on the grounds that a great honor--a visit of the President--was being bestowed on the village, so the Village Deputy Chief explained.

Chapter V

Financial Affairs:

The Collection of Rice Field Taxes

Among the various aspects of financial activities in Khanh Hau one of the most promising for exploring beyond the depth of the preceding analysis was the rice field tax. Interest in examining this became greatly stimulated by reading the incoming correspondence files of the village--much of the correspondence discussed the failure of villages throughout the Province to collect taxes. As will be noted, both the provincial and district agencies attempted in various ways to stimulate collections.

The analysis for this chapter was organized around two aspects: (1) the timing of tax payments; and (2) the problem of delinquency. Because data about non-resident (absentee landowners) payments were incomplete or possibly incomplete, the analysis was limited almost entirely to resident taxpayers.

The steps in rice field tax collection procedure were relatively simple. With the assistance of provincial tax and land offices, the Village Financial Councillor prepared the tax roll--a list of the property owners and their total landholdings. Presumably the list had been cross-checked by the provincial land office to verify its completeness. In essence, the division of work between the Province and the Village was that the former provided the list of names and the hectarage and the Village extended the computations and made the collections. In recent years preparing the tax rolls had usually been completed by February, about one month after taxes became collectible.

The tax payments were made in three different ways. The taxpayer could appear at the Village Hall either voluntarily or after being warned by the Village or the District. Second, the village council representative, either the Financial Secretary or the Village Clerk, could go directly to the taxpayers. Such a trip might also involve, presumably for security measures, the Police Chief and six or so members of the Village Self-Guard. Occasionally these collection trips involved visits to other villages. And third, the taxpayer could pay his bill directly to the provincial treasure. This was the expected practice for non-residents.

The amount to be paid by the individual taxpayer depended (in addition to the size of his holdings) on three variables --the quality of the land, the basic tax rate, and the village and provincial surcharge rates. During at least the past three years none of these had varied--thus in practice the amount of the levy had been fixed. According to the village Deputy Chief, the Council possessed the power to determine the land classifications, and some minor changes had been made each year; however the records and the Village Clerk in effect discounted this.[1]

According to the Village Clerk, a former financial secretary had classified all of the rice fields as of highest quality, and even though it was known the records were not accurate, no effort had been made to adjust the classifications. Thus, all rice fields bore a basic tax of 85$ per hectare while the allowable range went as low as 10$.

The basic rate, as well as the general tax plan, was determined by the central government which received the greatest share of the revenues, about 87 percent. Knowing the basic rate, the Village could determine its own levy providing it did not exceed five percent of the central government levy. But in Khanh Hau there had been no concern about this since application of the maximum had become automatic presumably because of the dire need for revenue.

The Timing of Tax Payments

An examination of the timing of tax payments became of considerable interest after reading the comments made by both Mr. David Cole of MSUG in his study of taxation in South Viet-Nam and one of his guest lecturers, Mr. Huynh van Dao, then Director of Local Budgets, General Direction of Budget and Foreign Aid at the Presidency.[2] In discussing the problem of property tax collections Mr. Cole pointed out the lack of a realistic deadline. Rather than setting the deadline close

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[1]The writer has been advised that, in principle, this authority rested with province chiefs.

[2]David Cole, Report on Taxation in the Provinces of South Vietnam, p. 6 and ____, Provincial and Local Revenues in Viet-Nam, Vol. 1, Lecture IV, p. 2, Huynh van Dao, "Local Taxes in Vietnam," David C. Cole, Provincial and Local Revenues in Vietnam, Vol. II, Lecture X, p. 3.

to the end of the harvest season, the government had merely identified the tax with the calendar year--thus a tax became delinquent at the end of December. In his opinion, Mr. Cole suggested a more proper timing would be sometime in March, at least for the southern provinces. Mr. Dao further criticized the administration of the rice field tax by pointing out the lack of any effective system for imposing penalties on delinquent payments.

Although in this analysis of payments in Khanh Hau no direct evaluation has been made of these criticisms, the writer has attempted to portray in considerable detail the actual pattern of payments as they were made over a period of 12 to 24 or so months--the results confirm Mr. Cole's observation about the lack of a realistic or effective deadline. In addition this portrayal points up the peak periods as well as the month-to-month spread as such. The timing of payments is shown first on the basis of the taxpayer and then according to the amount of tax payments.

Pattern of Payments by Number of Taxpayers

The most reliable data are those for the payments made by the taxpayers shown in Section "A" of Figure 17 since only the resident taxpayers were included in that survey. In contrast the data presented in Section "B" reports on the non-resident taxpayers. As has already been mentioned, information about non-residents may be incomplete since payments could have been made directly to the Province and no report given to the Village. The data, nevertheless, are worth nothing since they cover more months.

The total number of resident rice field taxpayers or owners in 1957 was 101. As shown in Section "A," by the end of the 20th month after the first tax collections had been made, 45 percent of the 101 taxpayers had not yet made their payments. The first taxpayer paid in February, 1957, and the 56th taxpayer in September, 1958.

To the extent that any interval during this 20-month period can be said to have been a "peak," the peak occured in March and April, 1958--one year and one month after the beginning of the tax payments. During those two months a total of 23 taxpayers made their payments, this amounted to 23 per cent of the 101 potential taxpayers--a more impressive statistic is the proportion of 41 percent of the taxpayers who had paid by September of the second year. What needs to be underscored is the fact that the peak did not occur until after the tax levies had become delinquent. During the tax year itself only 21 of the 101 taxpayers made their payments and most of these were in the last few months.

Figure 17

Agricultural Land Tax Payments in Khanh-Hau Village 1956 and 1957
By month and number of taxpayers

Section "A"

Resident Taxpayers Paying 1957 Tax

Month	Ricefield taxpayers			Garden-Plot taxpayers		
	Number	% of total	Cumulative percentage	Number	% of total	Cumulative percentage
1957						
1. January	-	-	-	1	1%	-
2. February	4	4%	-	-	-	-
3. March	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. April	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. May	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. June	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. July	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. August	6	6	10%	-	-	-
9. September	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. October	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. November	4	4	14	2	3	4%
12. December	6	6	20	2	3	7
1958						
13. January	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. February	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. March	9	9	29	3	5	12
16. April	14	14	43	3	5	17
17. May	3	3	46	2	3	20
18. June	2	2	48	3	5	25
19. July	-	-	-	1	1	26
20. August	6	6	54	4	6	32
21. September	1	1	55	-	-	-
	55			21		

Note : Total number of resident ricefield taxpayers for 1957 taxes was 101; garden-plot taxpayers, 68.

Section "B" must be considered incomplete since some tax payments were probably not reported to the Village.

Source: Tax Records of Khanh-Hau as of September 30, 1958.

Figure 17, page 2.

Section "B"

Resident and Non-Resident Taxpayers Paying 1956 Tax

Month		Ricefield taxpayers			Garden-Plot taxpayers		
		Number	% of total	Cumulative percentage	Number	% of total	Cumulative percentage
1956							
1.	January	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	February	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	March	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	April	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	May	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	June	2	2%	-	2	3%	-
7.	July	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	August	5	4	6%	1	1	4%
9.	September	4	3	9	-	-	-
10.	October	6	5	14	1	2	6
11.	November	1	1	15	1	1	7
12.	December	8	6	21	5	8	15
1957							
13.	January	1	1	22	-	-	-
14.	February	11	9	31	1	1	16
15.	March	6	5	36	1	3	18
16.	April	4	4	40	2	3	21
17.	May	5	4	44	3	4	25
18.	June	1	1	45	-	-	-
19.	July	5	4	49	2	3	28
20.	August	10	12	57	5	10	35
21.	September	4	3	60	1	2	37
22.	October	3	3	63	1	2	39
23.	November	-	-	-	-	-	-
24.	December	7	6	69	1	1	40
1958							
25.	January	-	-	-	1	2	42
26.	February	-	-	-	-	-	-
27.	March	-	-	-	-	-	-
28.	April	2	1	70	1	1	43
29.	May	1	1	71	-	-	-
30.	June	1	1	72	-	-	-
31.	July	-	-	-	-	-	-
32.	August	2	2	74	2	3	46
33.	September	-	-	-	-	-	-
		89			31		

An even more delinquent pattern occurred in the payment of the 1957 garden tax. By the end of the 20th month of tax payments only 21, or 32 percent, of the 68 listed taxpayers had paid, in contrast to the 56 percent level for the rice field taxpayers. Again no major peak can be noted but following the same trend the peak period came after the end of the tax year and in the two months of March and April during which 9 or 43 percent of the 21 tax-paying taxpayers were reported. During the tax year itself, however, only seven made their payments.

Section "B," which must be considered incomplete since some tax payments made to the province by non-resident landlords may not be recorded, is still valuable for it covers a longer period--a total of 33 months in contrast to 21 months for the 1957 tax. Perhaps the most interesting pattern shown is the continual trickling-in of payments once the trickle had begun. This began in the 6th month of the tax year, 1956, and extended almost without halting to the 24th month and then began again four months later as another steady trickle stopping in August, 1958. By that time 74 percent of the taxpayers were recorded as paid in the village records. Again no major peaks can be noted, although during the 20th month a peak of 12 percent was obtained. Garden payments, likewise, trickled-in and reached a minor peak of 10 percent also in the 20th month.

Pattern of Payments by Amounts Paid

This analysis is limited to the payments made by the resident taxpayers on their 1957 taxes because of the incompleteness of the data for 1956. Since the analysis was extremely concentrated, considerable detail has been included in Figure 18. The period covered in this figure is the same as that in Figure 17 for the 1957 tax, that is, from January, 1957, to September (inclusive), 1958, a period of 21 months.

On the basis of amounts paid, this shows that by the end of the 21st month, about 63 percent of the assessed ricefield taxes on resident landowners had been collected. By the end of the tax year itself, however, only 17 percent had been collected. These proportions follow closely those noted in the analysis of the number of taxpayers. Also, the patterns are similar as to the peak periods of March and April of the second year. During those two months 34 percent of the total assessments were collected--and this represented slightly over one-half of the amounted actually collected during the 21 months.

Figure 18

Khanh Hau Village Ricefield Tax Payments:
Resident Landowners (1957 Tax Levy)

Date	Number	Amount	Pattern of Payments: Average	Pattern of Payments: Median	Total	% of total assessment	Cumulative per cent
1957		$					
February	4	15-127-318-991	363$	223$	1,451$	3.8%	
August	6	21-54-70-89-96-143	79	80	473	1.2	5.0%
November	4	36-426-906-2335	926	666	3,703	9.8	14.8
December	6	84-100-108-143-252-256	157	126	943	2.5	17.3
1958							
March	9	26-31-31-98-281-627-636 1857-1957	616	281	5,544	14.7	32.0
April	14	46-161-234-240-281-333-345 396-412-638-746-895-1192-1330	518	371	7,249	19.2	51.2
May	3	94-132-594	273	132	820	2.2	53.4
June	2	127-636	382	382	763		
August	6	18-95-163-372-804-957	402	268	2,409	6.3	61.7
September	1	438	438$	252$	438	1.1	62.8
Total collected as of 30 September 58:					23,793$		62.8%

Note : Tax pattern for all 101 resident taxpayers was 372$ for average and 225$ for median payments.
Source: Khanh-Hau Tax Records on file in Village Hall.

The following analysis was suggested, in effect, by an explanation about the tax collection policies of the Village Council given by the Village Clerk. It was his observation that as a rule the council began its tax collections by going first to the larger landowners since they could more easily afford to make the payments before harvest time. With the use of data in Figure 19 one can see what the actual pattern of payments was according to the size of the tax. Were, as the clerk implied, most tax payments at first received from the larger taxpayers? What, in general, was the pattern of tax payments on the basis of size? Which group, the smaller or the larger taxpayers, were more responsive?

On the basis of Figure 19 it cannot be said that the early collections were received primarily from the larger landowners. In fact, a much greater proportion of the small landowners, that is, a greater proportion than large landowners, who paid taxes made their payments during the first year. In the first year, 1957, 52 percent of the small landowners made their payments in contrast to 23 percent of the large landowners. The flurry of payments by the larger landowners did not occur until the second year, the period of delinquency.

On the basis of this it is fair to say that among the resident landowners the more responsible group--the group more willing to make the tax payments--were the smaller landowners. "Small" and "large" are, of course, relative terms. For this comparison small landowners as a group averaged a tax payment of 84$, which in terms of field size represents a tax on slightly more than one hectare of rice fields; large landowners in this group, having an average tax of 723$, owned on the average slightly less than eight hectares. More responsive is also a relative term. While the small landowners were more responsive during the first year, their two-year total was less than that for the large landowners and both by the end of September, 1958, were obviously still far short of a total membership in the "paid-up" group.

The Problem of Delinquency

It has already been suggested that Khanh Hau faced a problem of delinquency in tax payments. Figures 17 and 18 revealed that after 20 months of tax collections the number of paid-up resident landowners did not exceed 55 percent and the amount from the same group 63 percent. The next step is to look more directly at the delinquency side of the tax

Figure 19

Khanh Hau Village

Comparison of Tax Payments by Small and Large Resident Landowners (1957 Ricefield Tax)

Resident Landowners

Small+ Landowners (Tax Range: not more than 225$)			Large+ Landowners (Tax Range: over 225$)		
Payments:			Payments:		
Average		84$	Average		723$
Median		92	Median		611
Total		2,104	Total		21,685
Paid 1957 Tax:			Paid 1957 Tax:		
In 1957	13	52o/o	In 1957	7	23o/o
In 1958	12	48o/o	In 1958	23	77o/o
	25	100o/o		30	100o/o

+Division made at median of all 101 resident taxpayers.

collection pattern in order to see what are some of the characteristics of the unpaid group. Afterwards some of the attitudes and actions of the various levels of officials - from village on up - about the problem itself will be noted.

The "Chronic" Delinquents

To get at the center of the delinquency pattern it seemed reasonable to isolate what the interpreter occasionally translated as the "stubborn" taxpayers. How many were there? Were they for the most part large or small landowners? How did their assessments compare with other groups? The results of the analysis prepared for answering such questions are reported in Figure 20.

A few parts of Figure 20 should be explained before presenting the analysis: "Chronic" delinquents is the writers own label, of course. It identifies what he considered as the heart of the delinquency pattern - the resident landowners who had not paid either the 1956 or 1957 ricefield tax, as of September 30, 1958, Perhaps it would have been better to have included the non-resident delinquents as well; however, the necessary data were not obtained. On the other hand, the analysis would have been more difficult since the group would have been even less homogeneous. "Range of highest frequency" means the classification of assessments which included the greatest number of assessments. This tabulation enriched the numerical summary of the various patterns. "Assessment Patterns" in contract to "Delinquency Patterns" described the assessments for all land owners whether or not they had made their tax payments. These data, therefore, provide the background against which all of the other groups should be placed for comparative purposes.

What does Figure 20 tell? Who were the "chronic" delinquents? In the opinion of the writer the key to their characteristics is the median of 125$. Being the lowest of the various medians shown, this indicates that the "chronic delinquents" as a group were the smallest landowners. And this interpretation received consistent support, fortunately, from the other computations--the low average of 245$, and the highest proportion, 35o/o of landowners in the 0 - 50$ classification ("Range of Highest Frequency") strengthen the pattern. In sharp contrast, for example, were the non-resident taxpayers with a median of 525$ and an average of 624$, even when the one exceptionally large assessment of 18,764$ was omitted on the ground that it would greatly distort these computations. The pattern also clearly differs from both the 1956 and 1957 delinquencies. It represents a definite separation of a group of smaller landowners - with one outstanding exception amounting to 1,123$ - from all others.

Figure 20

Pattern of Delinquent Ricefield Taxpayers in Khanh-Hau Village

TAXPAYERS	Number	Tax Assessment Average	Median	Range of Highest Frequency	Total Range	Spread
Delinquency Pattern:						
"Chronic Delinquents"[a]	23	245$	125[d]$	0-50$ (35%)	8 - 1123$	1105$
Resident Delinquents - 1956	26	262[b]	175	0-50$ (31%)	8 - 1123	1105
Resident Delinquents - 1957	46	299	255	0-50$ (29%)	8 - 1123	1105
Assessment Pattern:						
Resident Taxpayers - 1957	101	372	225	0-50$ (21%)	8 - 2334	2326
Non-Resident Taxpayers - 1957	31	624[c]	525	101-150 (29%)	8 - 18,764	18,756

a. Defined as resident taxpayers not paying either 1956 or 1957 tax.
b. Classified in ranges of 50$ with exception of assessments over 1,000$.
c. Average does not include the outstandingly large assessment of 18,764$, which, when included, results in an average of 1209$ per non-resident taxpayers.
d.

Assessment	Chronic Delinquents
1 - 50$	8
51 - 100	3
101 - 150	1
151 - 200	-
201 - 250	2
251 - 300	1
301 - 350	-
351 - 400	2
401 - 450	2
451 - 500	2
680	1
1,123	1
	23

Source: Khanh Hau Tax Records.

The Concern of Village and Higher Officials

It was quite apparent that higher officials in Long An Province had been aware and concerned about the problem of tax delinquency throughout the Province. It was also apparent, however, that they were not certain what should be done to improve collections. As will be illustrated, their techniques ranged from praise, to threats of court trials to seizure of crops. It became apparent that the lack of specific sanctions and means of obtaining either the revenue or some other form of compensation were causing a major frustration for the higher authorities. To be sure one cannot fully appreciate their feelings nor evaluate their judgments without having a more complete knowledge of some of the other factors involved --especially the political security problems. Undoubtedly concern over pressuring the landowners during recent years has been a major political issue for it cannot be denied that the problem of tax delinquency has been closely interwoven with the more basic problems of waging a continuing battle against the anti-governmental forces. Without knowing the political background of the tax problem this examination must be limited to describing the observable attitudes and actions of the higher authorities.

Quoted in Figure 21 is a letter of the Province Chief addressed to the District Chiefs--as a means for pushing them toward better collections. The Thu Thua District Chief (perhaps with the approval of his superior) decided to duplicate the letter and forward it "for your information" to the village councils.

The letter contains several interesting points. For example, some indication of the comparison between tax collection patterns in Khanh Hau can be derived from the report for the entire Province. Apparently by April, 1957, about 30 percent of the 1956 land taxes had been collected--surprisingly similar, as shown in Figure 18 to the pattern in Khanh Hau for the 1957 tax since only 32 percent had been collected by April from the village resident taxpayers. This similarity cannot be given much importance as a standard by which to measure Khanh Hau, yet it at least offers some clue as to the possible relationship--it suggests that collections in Khanh Hau followed the province-wide pattern. Second, the letter indicates that the Provincial Chief considered the major stumbling block to be the village councils: "The deplorable situation is largely due to the laxity of the village councils."

Figure 21

Problem of Tax Delinquency: Letter of Long An Province Chief to District Chiefs, April 3, 1957

From: Province Chief
To : District Chiefs of Long An
Subject: Collection of 1956 land taxes

Your special attention is called to the fact that the collection of 1956 land taxes was unsuccessful. Of the estimated 3,201,339.72$ the collection so far has been only 935,476.31$ for our province.

I have advised you that the deplorable situation is largely due to the laxity of the village councils in speeding up tax collection. I have noticed recently that certain councils had not even forwarded to the official treasury the already collected taxes for preceding years. Such an act not only was in disregard of laws but also seriously harmed the national budget, as part of its resources have been cut.

Your special care should be given to bring an end to the situation. Constant control should at the same time be exerted over the villages' records and cash, at least once a month, and village councils should be required to turn over all taxes collected. Furthermore, they should be better stimulated to speed up the collection of the remaining taxes.

As for Chau-Thanh district, I am keenly interested in your reasons as to why no taxes for 1955 and 1956 were obtained from the villages of An-vinh-Ngai and Hoa-Phu.

It is my belief that your utmost efforts and your sense of service will save the situation, thus preventing possible criticisms by the Superior.

Deputy Province Chief
for the Province Chief

(copy)

The central authorities have also employed a cash incentive. In Khanh Hau this amounted to four percent of the national tax. The commission was awarded to the member of the council responsible for tax collection, not to the council. In practice, however, according to the Village Clerk, the recipient - the Village Chief - had been "generous" in sharing his commission with other members by buying drinks, etc. This explanation was without doubt motivated by a desire to defend the Chief since the Clerk had just finished explaining that he himself did much of the actual work involved in collecting the taxes. It is interesting to note for the perspective given the village surcharge that this four percent commission almost equals the amount of the levy for village purposes.[3]

With one exception, all of the district tax correspondence in 1957 was addressed to all villages, rather than just to Khanh Hau. This correspondence varied from rather routine requests--usually marked "urgent"--for information about collections during the past week or month to the other extreme of threats.

The following communications illustrate the type received during the three months beginning January 1: a request for tax collection data for 1953, 1955, and 1956 including names, acreage, taxes, and addresses; a comparison of tax collections in 1955 and 1956; requests for monthly tax reports shortly after the end of the month; and follow-up requests reminding the village councils of the earlier requests. The only letter addressed specifically to Khanh Hau during the year was received in this period. It contained a customary plea about speeding up collections plus a form to be used in making deposits. The form carried the warning that failure to comply with financial regulations would result in being called before the "authorities."

Beyond these types of stimulants all of the villages received two of a more spectacular nature, both during the first three months of 1957.

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[3]Prior to 1946 another incentive plan existed - five per cent was paid for taxes collected during the first six months; four percent, next three 3 months; two percent for the last three months of the tax years; and one percent for first half of the second year. According to decree No. 483 BTC/TV, March 30, 1959, the four percent will be given to the village administration rather than to any individual.

Apparently in order to throw some fear into the delinquent taxpayers, the District Chief informed the village councils that in the future delinquents would be used in court "... to set an example." One can assume that the necessary legal steps would be taken by the District Chief after receiving the list of delinquent taxpayers from the villages. The second plan was outlined in the following letter of the District Chief:

> Village authorities of Phong Thanh have informed me that in the absence of landowners, tax collection from tenants themselves had met with a lot of difficulty since they have been uncooperative.
>
> Severe steps should thus be taken to deal with them; when harvest comes only tenants who paid their taxes to their landowners should be permitted to harvest their crop. If they refuse to comply, village councils themselves should hire the harvesters to do the work, sell the paddy, pay for the labor cost plus taxes due, and give all the remaining to the tenants and their landlords.

Both plans could be used concurrently, of course, since the former was aimed at the landowner and the latter at the tenant who had been failing to make his annual rental payments to his landlord. It is the writer's understanding that neither method had been used in Khanh Hau, at least up to April 1, 1959.[4]

The pattern of correspondence about tax collections for the first three months of 1958 did not vary greatly from that for the same period in 1957. It continued to consist of a mixture of periodic requests for data, advice, and stringent measures for improving tax collection.

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[4]For about ten years the Khanh Hau Village Council had been helping the large absentee landowner collect rent. This obviously required some bookwork, as indicated by one three page report that was shown to the writer. The collections were made without any commission, however; according to the Village Chief, one value in helping was that it facilitated getting the tax payments for the Village. Also, although no commission was charged, the Village did invite the landowner to contribute to village activities such as Spring Tree, the Tomb drive, and other community activities.

Whether monthly or weekly tax collection reports should be required seemed to be an unsolved problem. On January 20, 1958, the district chief asked the villages for monthly reports; and on the following day, for weekly reports. In his January 20 letter, in addition to asking for statistical data, he sought information for each month as to steps taken by the village council to improve collections. (Although the writer did not specificially check outgoing correspondence to see what Khanh Hau had reported, insofar as he could recall no unusual types of procedures were reported.)

While in 1957 the District Chief had announced the plan to sue delinquent taxpayers, in 1958 he advised the village councils to bring them to the district office for questioning. The village Police Chief and Self-Guard were authorized to accompany the Finance Councillor during this procedure. And in the same letter the District Chief issued the warning holding the entire membership of the village council responsible for tax collections. Later on another "stimulant" appeared --a carbon copy of a letter sent by the District Chief to two village councils inviting them to appear before him to explain their low collection rates for the preceding year. And near the end of March, 1958, the District Chief, addressing all villages, expressed strong dissatisfaction with tax collections.

Administration by correspondence was, of course supplemented by other forms of contact. According to the Village Chief, it was customary at the monthly meetings between all Villages and the District Chief to report on tax collections; likewise personal visits by both the District and Canton Chiefs provided the occasion for discussing the problems involved. Beginning sometime during the middle of 1958, a procedure was established for recording the major observations of the personal visits. By an order of the Department of Interior, each village was to maintain an inspection book for use by any inspecting officers. Although by March 20, 1959, only three entries had been made in the Khanh Hau register --two by the District Chief and one by the Canton Chief--the need for improving revenue collections was mentioned on all three occasions. While the District Chief limited his comments to suggesting that the Village should attempt to improve collections--in order to have more funds for carrying out village projects, the Canton Chief criticized the Council by writing:

> The village council has not been very active in village revenue collection--try to get more.
>
> Please accelerate tax collection...try to get as much village income as possible.

In contrast to the concern about tax collections expressed by the higher officials, from the Canton Chief on up, the Village Officials of Khanh Hau seemed almost indifferent to the problem. A reasonable explanation for this contrast was offered by the village Deputy Chief: that the District Chief was not worried about the collections from Khanh Hau for the problem of delinquency was far less serious there than in other villages. Although this observation about the attitude of the District Chief does not seem to jibe with that indicated by the "inspection book," nevertheless, it still might be valid. There is probably some reasonable explanation that could resolve the two contrasting attitudes.

To the Council's credit it obviously had given some attention to the more general problem of the inadequacy of the revenue sources for the village. During the past two years, as a means for improving the financial condition, it made the following suggestions to the district and provincial authorities: (1) to transfer some of the budgeted items to the provincial budget, primarily the expenditures for the canton personnel; (2) to purchase rice fields that would become part of the communal lands; and (3) to allow the Council to serve as the local agent for the selling of lottery tickets. All three were favorably received, according to the Village Chief. And action was completed on the first, as indicated by the expenditure patterns already examined in the preceding chapter. According to the Village Chief, even the President on his visit to the village in 1958 supported the proposal to purchase more rice fields. This was to be accomplished with a loan received from the central government; however, the major obstacle was the inadequacy of the obtainable loans. At the close of field research the Village Council was still anticipating approval to serve as lottery agent.

But, on the other hand, the Council might be strongly criticized for its apparent lack of interest in improving the system of tax administration. Even though it may have ranked fairly well with other villages, nevertheless, it was recognized as a "poor" village that could not finance its own Council. It would not be difficult to draw the conclusion that the council members realized that financial aid from the outside would take care of their needs once local funds had been depleted and the judgment of the District Chief helped to ease what concern they might have possessed about tax collections. From what observations the writer obtained about other taxes as well as the rice field tax, it became evident that much could be done to improve the entire pattern of tax administration--to make adjustments in the assessments, to make certain that all taxable property was properly listed, and to maintain a better rate of collections.

The Village Financial Councillor indicated an awareness of the lack of effective administration. At one time he mentioned that the Village Council was not strict--but that it merely kept contacting the "stubborn" taxpayers--and later on, when he was soon to become an ex-official because of his desire to resign and devote his efforts to his private affairs, he ventured to say that the Council was "too easy" on some taxpayers.

Without doubt there were many factors affecting the attitudes of the council members toward the tax administration. Historical patterns of administration might be a major one. Also, the writer suggests the Village Council members seemed to prefer seeking voluntary contributions rather than to strengthen tax collections. Tax collections were still viewed, the writer suggests, largely as a means for benefitting the central government, for, as an example, the village surcharge on the rice field tax was almost meaningless. In contrast a system of contributions would adequately serve the needs of the villagers. Also, by using contributions as a means for raising revenues the Council could, in effect, establish its own progressive tax pattern. "When we want to raise money we go directly to the more wealthy persons," the Chief responded to the writer's comment about increasing revenues from the tax system.

In short, the concern of the village officials about tax collection was greatly modified by such factors as (1) an awareness of assistance from the Province; (2) a preference for using a system of contributions; (3) the identification of tax collection with the central government rather than with its own; and (4) possibly already having a satisfactory record of collections in comparison with other villages. In combination such factors could greatly ease the concern of Village Council members.

Summary

This examination of the rice field tax collections was designed to provide some additional insights into the financial affairs in Khanh Hau Village. Emphasis was placed on analyzing the pattern of payments made by the resident landowners. The examination showed the timing of tax payments. It was found that the tax year itself did not provide a significant proportion either of the total assessment or of the amount collected during the first 20 months of tax payments.

The major peak in tax payments occurred from 12 to 14 months after the initial collections. Contrary to what might have been anticipated, smaller landowners seemed to have been more responsive during the first year than the larger landowners. However, by the end of the total period examined, smaller taxpayers were as a group more delinquent. This held true also in the identification of the "chronic delinquents," those landowners who had failed to pay taxes for two consecutive years. Although the range itself for the delinquent group extended far into the larger landowner portion, the majority of the resident delinquents were the smaller taxpayers.

Concern about the lack of satisfactory tax collections obviously had been expressed many times and in many ways by the higher officials. Various devices ranging from praise to threats against the public officials, and from court suits to crop seizures against the villagers had been proposed, if not employed. These variations or these experiments indicated some bewilderment among the officials. In sharp contrast with the higher authorities, Khanh Hau Village officials displayed little concern either about rice field tax collections or improvements in the overall tax system. Various factors might have brought about this lack of interest, such as: (1) awareness of the availability of financial assistance from the higher authorities; (2) unsympathetic identification of tax collection with central governmental rather than with village welfare; and (3) preference for a system of contributions rather than an expansion of the tax program even for village activities.

Chapter VI

Political and Personal Security

For a study of village administration in the United States this chapter would have been entitled "Law Enforcement" or "Public Safety" or "The Functions of the Police Commissioner." But Viet-Nam is not the United States and the setting for law enforcement was so different that it greatly affected the functioning of this traditional service. The Khanh Hau Police Chief at this point in the development of the new nation of Viet-Nam was much more oriented, it is fair to say, to the broader problem of political security than to personal security. Although still an enforcement officer, nevertheless he also had become responsible for some aspects of political security administration and for some that lie in both fields of administration. Yet while concerned with political security, he was not the only village official operating directly in that area. Along with him was the Information Agent. It did happen that prior to 1957 in Khanh Hau the Police Chief was also the Information Agent; however on the plea of the Council to lighten his load, the duties of information agent were transferred to another council member, the Civil Status Councillor. Political security, then, had become a responsibility shared by these two two.

Early in this chapter a major exception is made to the stated focus of this study--the administrative activities of the Village Council and individual councillors. This exception was not anticipated during the preparation of the field research; however for several reasons it was deemed justifiable to make a major adjustment at this point. The exception will be found in the section, "The Pervasive Character of Governmental Propaganda Programs." The more the writer came into contact with village life the more he began to appreciate the great extent to which the concern of the central government over political security infiltrated the entire system of governmental activities, until he was willing to recognize (as the villagers probably had done many months before) that almost any governmental program whether in the field of agriculture, education, or recreation was guided greatly by concern over political security. This is not, of course, the observation of one involved in security matters in the nation of Viet-Nam but only of one who has had the privilege of observing first hand some aspects of rural life in addition to living in the nation for close to three years. Thus, the first reason for making this exception was the writer's belief that the knowledge he gained of the central government's political security program through observation of community life merited

inclusion in this study as background material for the description of village administrative activities in this field. Second, political security had become such a closely interwoven part of both village life and governmental programs that avoiding this aspect would have meant excluding a basic feature of the setting in which village administration was found. It perforce almost had to be included either as part of a general introduction to the village or in some aspect of village administration. The writer chose the latter. Third, the general spirit of this study was to find out what could be learned about village life. The writer was fortunate, partly by the mere coincidence of being in the village on the same day, of observing and recording with assistance of interpreters, of course, some key visits of higher level governmental administrators, something that had not been anticipated when the study was formulated. Excluding the resulting data merely because of non-conformance with the formal objective was viewed as being unnecessarily rigid in one's research. To the contrary, the spirit for this study was one of flexibility since the path ahead usually was uncertain as to its nature and its direction.

How secure was Khanh Hau? Was it a village in which Communist sympathizers were very active? Was it continually or even periodically being subjected to terroristic activities?

As a village located in the southern provinces it was fair to raise these security questions about Khanh Hau for it was generally recognized that most of the subversive activities, the activities presumably supported by agents of the North Viet-Nam government, were directed toward the provinces located south and west of Saigon. Also there were many apparent signs of the government's concern over security matters. For example, a traveller on the main highways to the south could note the heavy concentration of military guards on the large bridges. Newspapers carried various reports and editorials about the attacks made by the anti-governmental forces. As they oftentimes stated, the attacks by armed groups would be directed toward the seizing and oftentimes killing of village officials and other village leaders such as hamlet chiefs, members of the self-guard and individuals recognized for their leadership qualities. Occasionally within one article could be found an enumeration of several attacks of recent times:[1]

> Saigon: several cases of assassination have been published in the daily Tu Do. Such a security

[1] "Security Needed for Village Officials," Saigon Daily News Roundup, USOM, March 10, 1959.

situation in rural areas will be detrimental to the spirit of village officials. It is hoped that the Interior Department will examine this situation to determine whether it is time to reconsider the problem for village officials... quoted below are three other murder cases which recently happened in Vinh Long and Kien Phong provinces (located about 75 miles south of Khanh Hau village)

March 5, Nguyen Quang Trang, administrative officer of An Binh village... was killed at night by three armed, unknown persons while he was returning home from his rest house on the bank of a river, 100 meters from his house.

March 6, Ho van Bien, police officer of My Tho village,... and a group of militamen were ambushed by an armed rebel group. After fifteen minutes of fighting Bien was killed by a bullet. The militiamen, short of ammunition, had to retreat to their post. However, after being reinforced by the Civil Guard, they returned to the battle spot, where a rebel body was found.

March 8, Ngo van Co, Dong Thanh village police officer,... was assassinated by a 13 man rebel group, armed with machineguns, who disguised themselves as national soldiers. It was learned that this group belongs to Ly thuong Kiet company of rebel forces.

As these reports show, subversive forces were well-organized and sometimes better armed than those of the villages. Newspapers also reported the discovery of caches of weapons in various localities.

Of more direct concern, areas adjacent to Khanh Hau had been the site of some activity. In November, 1958, the writer was informed by villagers residing in one hamlet that "some" members of the Viet Cong had been arrested in the adjacent village, just across the stream. The area was labelled, in fact, by the Khanh Hau villagers as a "trouble spot."

But, in general, Khanh Hau was described as not having a "security" problem. Such an observation was made by the district chief as well as by the village chief. In one discussion the village chief stated "Our village is the most tranquil in the province but we should be modest." Of course, such judgments are subjective--what is meant by "no problem" and "most tranquil?" Insofar as the writer was able to determine, the village never had had, that is, since the end of the national

conflict in 1954, any cause for seeking armed defense. The village guard itself had never been alerted except in times of test drills administered by the police chief or district chief. And further evidence of a relatively high degree of security was the willingness of the village officials to permit the writer and the other members of the research group to remain in the village overnight for special occasions. However, a few signs pointed in the opposite direction. Early in 1957 one villager, the writer was told by a local informant, had been arrested in an adjacent village for hanging "rebel" flags and distributing subversive literature. More than a year later two members of the Village Self-Guard were under investigation since their names were found on a list taken from a Viet Cong captive. And, though still contending that security was not a "problem," the Village Chief always insisted on the research group taking the noon siesta in a centrally located house rather than in one on the periphery. Also the existence of the manned guard posts as well as the barbed wire in front of the village hall served as a constant reminder of the political security problem in southern Viet-Nam and, therefore, in Khanh Hau.

The Pervasive Character of Governmental Propaganda Programs

The incidents in the village that made the writer aware of what he has labelled "the pervasive character" of the governmental program of propaganda for political security occurred during two meetings concerning the introduction of a new technique for encouraging agricultural development and one related to the public school program. As will be illustrated, during these meetings representatives of the central government devoted considerable attention to the problem of political security. Much of their discussion, in fact, dealt with political security rather than with the ostensible purpose of the meeting--in the case of the former, to establish an agricultural association; and in the latter, to award prizes to the outstanding students. In short the theme of political security greatly pervaded if not dominated all three meetings.

Political Security: Farmers' Association

In the spring of 1959 the central government announced its plan to create a national association of farmers based in principle upon a foundation of small unit associations to be organized in the hamlets and villages. The general purpose of this association was to provide various types of assistance

for the individual farmer. This discussion concerns two village-wide meetings--the organization meeting and a preliminary conference held two months earlier.[2]

The preliminary meeting, in April, 1959, began about 9:00 a.m. Although most village-wide meetings were held either in the dinh next door or in the school's courtyard, this took place in the Village Hall, with the speakers sitting in a central location and villagers finding seats wherever available, some having to sit almost out of sight behind the alter or outside the building. Benches, desk tops, and the dirt floor provided the resting places. All told about 100 villagers attended the two-hour meeting.

The focal point for the group were the five (or more) officials from district and higher offices led by the district information agent. Among the others were agents in charge of anti-communist denunciation programs, health, community development, and agricultural credit. Close by were the village chief and deputy chief and one village notable (who, according to the interpreter, generally spoke in support of the governmental proposals rather than criticizing or seeking further clarification, but who, unfortunately, was not identified by the interpreter as to his role in the village nor as to his specific role in the present conference). The information service agent presided.

As customary with village meeting, the opening ceremony consisted of paying homage to the national flag by standing for one minute and following the guidance of the information agent in shouting "Hail to the flag." Following this introduction, the chairman stated the purposes of the meeting and estimated its length at three hours. Its two purposes were (1) to clarify any of the previous explanations as found in the basic legal document and the accompanying question-and-answer section; and (2) to discuss freely the advantages and disadvantages of forming such an association.[3]

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[2]This is based largely on the notes made by interpreters on the MSUG staff who attempted to obtain a verbatim record of both meetings. The writer attended the organization meeting and was able to observe personally the voting process.

[3]Copies of a pocketbook-size document "Farmers Association --Study Material" had been distributed to the hamlets for discussion purposes in preceding weeks. This document contained the decree, 57 questions and answers, and in the appendix, copies of the various legal forms to be used in establishing local branches.

A chronology of the topics covered during the two-hour meeting facilitates obtaining an overall view as well as some appreciation of the balance of subjects among three major subjects as established for this analysis: those concerning the announced objective of the meeting; those relating to the political security; and those involving other matters, largely various aspects of community development.

Topics Discussed During the Two-hour Meeting

Time		Topic
0845 - 1015	1.	Farmer's Association
	2.	Political Security
1015 - 1045	3.	Political Security Projects
	4.	Community Projects
	5.	Political Security
	6.	Health
	7.	Community Projects
	8.	Agricultural Credit
	9.	Fire Prevention
	10.	Collection for Relief of Fire Victims
	11.	Illiteracy

What this listing shows is that the announced objective of the meeting was only one of several topics covered, although, to be sure, it consumed the major proportion of the time, somewhere between one and one-half of the two hours. That discussion was led by the key speaker and presiding officer, the Information Service Agent (rather than by someone from the Agricultural Service which would seem to be a more appropriate source in view of the subject) who closed off his phase of the program by going into some aspects of the political security issue. This same issue was then picked up by the next speaker, an assistant information agent, who moved into a community development subject and then back again into the problem of political security.

In this list of topics only one--illiteracy--was introduced by a villager. All others were presented by visitors. However, this is not to say that the discussions were almost entirely controlled by the visitors since the major topic was introduced with an invitation for the villagers to pose questions regarding the Farmers' Association.

A villager, then, began the discussion by asking a fairly general question about the purpose of the association, the membership fee, and eligibility of women for membership. Shortly thereafter one old villager complained that the monthly fee of 10$ would be a burden on him.

With this framework of questions the District Information Agent proceeded to explain the purpose of the membership dues and fees as well as to list the various objectives of the association (which are discussed elsewhere in this study). As to the political security aspects of the association the following part of his explanation is to be noted.

> "In the past, Vietnamese farmers had lived under the yoke of feudal landlords, French imperialists, and then Communists, none of whom did anything other than sweat the people. No cooperation among the farmers had been promoted and no meetings or associations were permitted. Now with full independence it was time to unite. Thus, the idea of the Farmers' Association with the following objectives was established."

And the objectives were then listed. Among the advantages of the Association, the speaker explained, would be the opportunity to buy fertilizer and other materials at lower prices and to market products at higher prices.

After all of these explanations, another villager returned to the problem of the monthly dues of 10$, contending that the charge would be a burden on the poor such as himself. The speaker had no solace to offer.

At this point the nature of the meeting took a sharp turn toward the subject of political security. According to the speaker, another purpose of the Association was to set up political instruction classes to guide the members in their study of political issues--world, nation, and village events --and of the background of governmental policies. Such study is needed in order to safeguard independence and democracy, the speaker added.

Not only the nature of the subject but also the attitude of the speaker changed. Various statements made by him will illustrate this change in attitude, a change away from one that seemed to be seeking spontaneous cooperation to one demanding cooperation. Following his reference to the political education objective of the Association, the speaker added both a hope and a threat--he hoped no one would miss the next meeting for he did not want to have to report names of absentees to the

district authorities. This threat was merely the opening wedge for a longer sermon on the indifference of the villagers toward their government. As the interpreter observed and reported the meeting it proceeded as follows:

> The speaker was getting a little perturbed and cross. He began speaking in a more reproachful manner, "What I have just said is about a struggle by the people and for the people, a struggle to consolidate democracy. Why have you not shown any enthusiasm for learning? You--inhabitants of this pilot community--the coming Independence Day will be an opportunity for you to show off that you have changed your behavior and have abandoned your indifference.
>
> I also know that many of you do not like to attend the communist denunciation meetings. You should know that such an attitude is very detrimental to the security of the Republic. Is that the way you fulfill your duty as a citizen in an independent and democratic country?
>
> The work of every committee, the agenda for every meeting, the topics discussed in community meetings should be well known by you and not neglected. Your indifferent attitude has been very discouraging for a long time. You have been making too many complaints about too many things because you have not been fully aware of the governmental regulations, laws, decisions and policies.
>
> Am I right in saying so? Any questions from you? From the hamlet chiefs? From the old villagers? Many of the village notables are absent today. Do they have a legitimate reason? What are their names? Why are they absent? (No answers were received).
>
> A revolution cannot be carried out by an army or by a security organization or a police force but only by all the citizens, all the inhabitants of the countryside. Why are we still far from being efficient in our fight against the Communists? Because we have not succeeded in putting all the villagers in the same political organization, (that is, in the National Revolutionary Movement), and because the villagers still have an indifferent attitude toward the anti-communist policy of the government.

> By the latest pennant hanging in Ap Dinh "A" and "B" by the Communists, we know that some opposition elements still remain here. The division into five households is not efficient enough to control opinion. I think there are still some agitators hidden among the Ap Dinh "A" and "B" households.
>
> During this year I hope that none of you will pay the agriculture tax to the Viet Cong and that all patriotic villagers will fight enthusiastically against the Communists. The inner man in some of you has two antagonistic tendencies: one for the National Government in the daytime, and the other for the Communist in the night.
>
> Any questions or comments?

According to the interpreter who observed the entire meeting, the villagers did not seem to be moved by this avalanche of criticism nor did they indicate any desire to defend themselves. At this point another speaker, apparently an assistant information agent more directly interested in the anti-communist denunciation program, addressed the group--continuing, it should be noted, with the same two themes of political security and indifference of the residents. His comments approximated the following pattern, including a compulsory requirement to be imposed on each villager:

> Now let us talk about the government declaration of April 26, 1958, regarding propositions made by the Government of North Viet-Nam for developing normal relations between and eventual reunification of the two parts.
>
> From now on everybody has to learn by heart all of the six-point declaration.[4] Before requesting for permission of any kind from the village council, the applicant will have to recite one or more of the six points of the Declarations.

Even this imposition placed on the villagers did not seem to arouse any interest in arguing with the officials--a pattern of reaction that one familiar with Viet-Nam history might have anticipated perhaps. The speaker went on to discuss the problem of indifference and need for political education:

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[4]See Appendix "C" for list of points villagers were to memorize.

> Why haven't some hamlet chiefs posted the Declaration bill in their houses. I know that some of them said that they dare not do since they are too afraid of rioters and other underground agents. You must know that if the Communists came here, they would not save anybody. They would not save anybody because he is a hamlet chief or village chief or deputy chief. You have met French troops, you have met fighters who defeated the French colonialists, but you have not known what the Communists are like as you are inhabitants of the southern part of Viet-Nam, but it is time now for you to know about them and be fully aware of the danger of their doctrines. That is why everybody should have enough courage to post the declaration in their houses and start again to distribute the copies and broadcast the government instruction and policy to all around you, as much as you can, as widely as you can.

This ended the plea to learn the Declaration and to distribute it among the people. The rest of this speaker's comments merit noting for they were quite illuminating about other aspects of village life. He went on to say:

> Another thing to do is make some preparation in the village for the forthcoming observation trip of the village councillor delegation which will take place very soon. (This probably was in reference to a national plan of village officer training to be based on exchange visits among the various villages.) It is wished that the Khanh Hau villagers do something to show off their enthusiasm for community work.

At this point one of the villagers offered the observation that the village hall was in need of a bookcase but this failed to please the district information agent who said, "You all must do something that will please the District Chief." But what that something should be was left unexplained. Perhaps the villagers already were aware of the type of performance expected from them.

The next phase apparently reflects the attitude of the higher authorities toward the general administrative organizational pattern of village life for the speaker indicated what he thought were the main or key organizations:

> For the time being there are two main organizations in Khanh Hau: the Youth Organization, and the National Revolutionary Movement. (The speaker made an appeal to the villagers suggesting they join both

> organizations if eligible.) The Youth Organization is available to those of both sexes from 18 to 25 years of age, and the National Revolutionary Movement to people of both sexes from 18 years of age upwards. There is no double membership fee or contribution for those who join both organizations.

He went on to explain the purpose of both:

> The first aims at promoting health, physical culture, youth and community and social activities of all kind; the second is for proper political activities.

Like the first speaker he could not refrain from in effect threatening the villagers even though he mixed his threat with a rational appeal:

> I know that most of you would react by saying that you do not like to be involved in political activities which look too delicate and troublesome to you. But do you realize that all of you have directly or indirectly participated in political activities, knowingly or unknowingly. Let me take the instance of a landowner who rents his land to other farmers in accordance with the governmental regulations and law. He has participated in the realization of the government's policy. Likewise a storekeeper who has paid the patent tax participated in the political life of the nation. Myself, when I popularize the governmental policies, I directly participate in the political life of our country. Why not you? Why are you somewhat afraid of politics? Comfort yourselves, I would say. Since the top leader of the organization--the National Revolutionary Movement--is our President himself, any of you who fails to join shows evidence of his indifference and could be regarded as guilty.

This speaker closed by answering a question regarding the executive committee membership of both organizations and their work.

> Executive committees in both organizations must have closer cooperation; they must not operate separately and must be more active in getting more members, and in collecting monthly contributions more efficiently. I promise to take charge of supervising the operations in all village and hamlet organizations.

From this point the conference coming into its last few minutes moved into the subject of health for which another speaker was introduced, then into community development, precautionary measures for fire protection, plan for collection for relief of fire victims in another community of the same province, and ended on a discussion of the problem of illiteracy introduced by a 30 year old villager. Again the technique of threat was employed. To resolve the illiteracy problem, the speaker suggested:

> First teach them right here in the village the three R's and try to finish the teaching before June; after that, the obstinate unlettered villagers who failed to attend the course will be called to the district and taught over there. They will have to pay for their board and lodging. Any questions or comments?

The meeting ended--about two hours after the first speaker had introduced the intial topic of "Farmers' Association."

Two months later the next major meeting concerning the development of a farmers' association was held. Its purpose was to organize the unit groups, that is, the hamlet groups, by electing hamlet officers. From what occurred during this meeting, it was apparent that interim meetings, probably on the hamlet level, had been held. Apart from the election, the highlight of this second meeting was an address given by the chief of the province. This address, like the preceding village level conference, dealt with the problem of political security along with subjects more closely related to the announced objectives of the farmers' association as such. Before examining the activities of the meeting itself, it is worth noting briefly the general setting and a few of the actions leading up to the election. (This ceremony will be briefly described later on since it, too, involved political security propaganda.) According to the Village Chief, the objective of this meeting of the farmers was to elect their officers. The fact that an election was to be held strongly interested the writer who immediately inquired if it would be permissible for him to attend. "To watch the farmers vote and put their ballots in the boxes?" the Village Chief asked. Approval was given without any hesitation.

Arriving at the announced opening time, 8:30 a.m. the writer noted the village officials sitting around outside the meeting hall--the series of school rooms from which had been taken the partitions. Arrangements for the meeting seemed to be the responsibility of an agent from outside the village. With the aid of a public address system, this agent was able to communicate with everybody in the area--with those in

adjoining classrooms as well as those outside waiting for the arrival of the province chief. The following are some of the announcements and instructions the agent gave the villagers about the election procedure and plans for receiving the Chief of Province:

> ...members of the hamlet associations, write the name of the candidate--not yours--on the ballot which you will receive at voting time.
>
> ...everybody in the other rooms should follow instructions from the main room.
>
> ...the representative in each room should explain that one voter may cast only one vote. Don't cast a vote for anyone else unless you have their written authorization.
>
> ...if you have any questions, please ask me now before the elections take place.
>
> ...if you are in favor of the nominated election board--the chairman, secretary, and tabulator--raise your hand and then clap (that is, at the proper time during the meeting).

An hour and a half-later the agent made the following announcement directing the villagers to get ready to receive the Province Chief:

> Get ready to greet the Province Chief and his party. All of you, except those in this room, will go out in the front yard. Anh Quan (a local resident who had formerly worked in the provincial information and youth service and was appointed Village Clerk late in 1959) would you see to it that the reception is properly arranged? Come back to your places as soon as the Province Chief has arrived.

The villagers were then arranged in two rows extending from the school to the gate of the school yard. The Chief of Province arrived at 10:30, two hours after the announced hour of the meeting. He immediately went to the speaker's platform, after shaking hands with almost all of the 200 villagers present and inviting the writer to join him and his four or so assistants on the platform while the village officials took seats in the front row of the assembly room.

The speech of the Chief of Province was centered on two main subjects--the farmers association and a recently enacted document providing for a change in judicial procedures. Through both subjects ran the theme of interest at this point in this study--the problem of political security. Although the following is not a verbatim report of the speech given by the Province Chief, it should clearly show the nature of his address to these villagers. Because it was one of the major addresses of the Province Chief to the villagers of Khanh Hau during the period of this study, the entire report prepared immediately afterwards by the MSU interpreter is included:

The Province Chief began:

I want to talk today about the Farmers' Association: its effects and its advantages.

For centuries the life of the peasants had not been given due concern by the authorities--the upper classes and the intelligentsia. Then the Communists, raising high the banner of nationalism, exploited the peasants to the bone. But they merely used words as propaganda to serve the interests of their Communist master, at the very expense of the poor peasants who constitute the overwhelming majority of our people. Peasants were not given any assistance in their livelihood.

Our President, in contrast, is giving great concern to the living of the rural people, the farmers. The aims of driving out the enemies and liberating the people has been achieved. Now it is time to take into account the fate of the peasants.

Freedom and democracy are incompatible with poverty. I will cite some examples. There is no freedom, no democracy when you peasants still have to consent to loans at any interest rate.

What are the achievements of the Government in the interests of the peasants? Land development, agricultural credit loans and new resettlement centers. In short, the Government has given land to the landless, making them owners of expropriated fields. All this constitutes a prime guarantee for democracy. Now the Government is taking another step: the imminent creation of farmers' associations that will keep the doors open to all, regardless of social classes or line of business--the landless, tenants, and merchants--to join.

The objectives of the association are: to foster solidarity among the farmers and to promote mutual assistance, thus attaining a higher standard of living. For example, in the future cooperatives of farmers associations will be formed, then you will get fertilizer at a fair price and no speculation will affect you. Farmers' associations will be established at various levels: central, provincial, district, village, and hamlet levels, from which you will obtain assistance. The cooperatives will buy fertilizer for the members; they will not resell, thus no intermediary can exploit you.

You plan to dig a pond or build a house but your financial ability won't permit you to hire workers. You will get mutual assistance. You might also borrow buffaloes and ploughs from your co-members and so forth. Productivity will therefore be improved. Then later, the district administrative board of the association will ensure the stability of the price for your paddy.

Also, as you may know, agricultural mechanization is improved with the use of tractors, a labor-saving device which will certainly improve the economy.

Following this explanation of the values to be gained from a farmers' association, the Province Chief made some comments about the election of local representatives. In essence his remarks were as follows:

May I remind you that vigilance must be maintained against communist infiltrators. Be extremely careful in casting your ballots, since those who are elected will be your representatives in voicing your aspirations and defending your interests. Cast your ballots for those you consider able and devoted to the common good. If your ballots go to the wrong persons and your aspirations remain unsatisfied, you will complain to me but I will be unable to help. And I would like to remind those elected that you should put the members' interests above all, even above your own.

Once the branch heads and assistants are elected, tell them your problems: terrorism? poverty? conflict? They can help you seek solutions.

I am highly satisfied with the formation of the farmers' associations. I have been to each of the pilot villages. I hope in the future more villagers will join the association. But in any circumstances, it is you who must help yourselves first, then your representatives with whom you have entrusted your souls will come next. Again, gentlemen, my best wishes for success.

With the exception of a few statements at the beginning and then again in these above paragraphs the Province Chief did not discuss any aspects of the political security issue; his final words, however, dealt directly with a severe measure the government had recently adopted in its efforts to combat the subversive movement.

I also want to talk a little about the newly-enacted law, the "10/59 law," providing for the establishment of special military courts.

Our government has been too tolerant towards the Communists, the saboteurs, who have carried out exploitations assassinations of village officials and civil servants who are opposing them. Formerly, sentences were too mild--two or three years--then after being well-fed, they were released.

The National Assembly has recently taken a more severe measure against them: the enactment of the "10/59" law, establishing three military courts in Hue, Banmethuot and Saigon. The courts are mobile, that is, they will conduct trials in the village in which an assassination occurs and the murderer is arrested. The maximum sentence by this military court will be death by a firing squad or beheading "on the spot." The minimum sentence will be life imprisonment, that is, a sentence of no return. Pardon will be allowed but only for those who rally to the cause of the Government.

This is just a summary of the law that has been devised to put an end to terrorism. I want to see an extensive and intensive study conducted throughout the village.

Thus, in both the earlier meeting and this the visiting officials--district and provincial authorities--gave vent to their concern about the problem of political security. In the first meeting the agents went so far as to threaten the

villagers--that is, indifference to the wishes of the President could be viewed as signs of guilt. In the second, although refraining from such a theme, the Chief of Province did conclude with a brief introduction to the new law, which, although he omitted the explanation, might allow a court to use more circumstantial evidence such as lack of interest as a basis for determining the guilt of arrested parties especially when the charge is one other than the taking of life. Thus, while the farmers had come to these meetings for the purpose of learning about a means for improving their economic conditions, the issue of political security became almost a coequal theme.[5]

Political Security: Annual Prize-Giving Ceremony for Village School

The other illustration of the extent to which political security and political propaganda have permeated village affairs was the annual prize-giving day of the village school. This meeting was held just two days before the second meeting discussed above and in the same assembly room. The opening address for the ceremony carried a theme that such a meeting for school children and parents might be expected to have. After acknowledging the presence of the army captain who as Deputy Chief of Province was representing the Province Chief, of the lieutenant serving as district chief, and of other visiting dignitaries, the school director addressed the assembly:

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[5]The election itself gave evidence of being highly controlled--controlled almost to an absurd extremity even when one recognizes the justifiable interest the Government had in preventing subversive personnel from obtaining offices. First, even to this writer, the election procedure looked strange when, as the agent earlier had instructed, each voter raised his right hand in almost military precision to approve of the selection of the election boards and then immediately applauded (One voter became confused and got out of step - he reversed the procedure by applauding first and then raising the hand). Second, although emphasis was placed on the use of secret ballots the results indicated complete control of the selections--every successful candidate received a unanimous vote. The hamlet groups had gone through a "ritual" of nominating two candidates for each office but the other candidates were apparently nothing more than a showpiece. That such a result had been anticipated was admitted later by one of the village officials who informed the writer that the "real" elections had occurred earlier in the hamlets.

> At this time of each year, when crickets start their monotonous songs, we all gather at this ceremony in order to share the joy of those pupils of ours who during the last school year had attained high scores; to give them, the very future builders of the nation, our warm kisses and encouragement in making further efforts toward progress in the next school year.
>
> Thanks to the devoted assistance from the Major, the Province Chief; the Fundamental School Director; and the parents of the pupils, our past record of achievement was possible. Our deep appreciation could by no means be fully expressed in my humble words, but we have this pledge to make: that our utmost efforts will be made in the building of the country's future men.
>
> Captain, Deputy Province Chief; Lieutenant, District Chief; and gentlemen, we do apologize for any possible shortcomings in organizing this ceremony. Thank you.

This was followed by a brief message of the President read by the District Chief. The message was almost free of references to the political security problem. However, immediately following was the message of the Province Chief, read by his deputy who in his opening remarks extended along with his greetings the slogan "Let's unite and eradicate the Communists." The message of the Province Chief contained the following attack:

> The Communists had in a disastrous manner upset our traditional morality--converting schools into propaganda centers in the service of a communist clique. The disastrous consequences: the pupils became treacherous towards friends and disrespectful toward parents.

And finally, the ceremony itself, during which songs and dances performed by the school children were interspersed with the awarding of prizes was prefaced by an unidentified voice at a hidden microphone stating:

> At the present time, Communist North Viet-Nam is burdened with hardships. Our South is peaceful...

And with this the ceremony for the children began.

ERRATA SHEET

After checking both Volume I and Volume II, we have discovered some errors that should be brought to the attention of the reader in order to prevent confusion or misinterpretation. There is, in addition, one note qualifying a substantive matter in Volume II that needed correcting in this edition. This error was caught in a recent interview with the Chief of Khanh Hau Village.

Comment on "The Fund Drive for the Marshal's Tomb." See Page 223 "Results of the Drive."

A major change should be made in the tone of the entire paragraph, as well as in one statement: the drive was only a partial success since it was not scheduled to receive any contributions from the Mutual Assistance Fund of Long An province. Thus, according to a recent interview with the Khanh Hau Village Chief, the drive was being continued in hopes of obtaining additional funds.

CORRECTIONS

Volume I

Page	Line	Change	To
15	20	delegues	delegates
22	12	endorcement	enforcement
23	9	too	two
35	12	members	member
37	42	preregotives	prerogatives
39	18	Huong Lac	Huong Lao
42	11	1904 +	1904 and 1927
46	12	Huong-gia	Huong-giao
57	15	Cai	Cau
86	final	/4.7	4.7
86	final	31.2	/31.2/
106	5	payee	payer
106	39	recor	records
113	28	nothing	noting
117	17	433$ 252$ (These are the average and median for the "Total collected as of 30 September 1958" shown on line 18.)	
120	26	contract	contrast
120	37	low	lowest
130	23	by these two two.	by these two.
141	18	intial	initial
150	25	dirst	first
155	18	3 5	335
156	7	destroy	destroyed
168	1	your	you

Volume II

Page	Line	Change	To
179	10	villager	landowner
183	3	--that they	--they
185	19	parts	party
192	20	own	one
195[b]	17	Ap Thu-Tuc	Ap Thu-Tuu
197	15	nothing	noting
197	29 30	village council	village administrative council
199	30	hamlet and chiefs	hamlet chiefs
202	21	himself	itself
207	37	was	were
213	13	(the Giau-Su)	(the Giao-Su)
214	30	Giau-Su	Giao-Su
222	30	second, the head of the President	second, the President
223	8	of Dinh Truong province	of Dinh Tuong
223	40	his	their
232	36	meant at that	meant that
241	28	ideas about for	ideas for
249	8	30 liters	160 liters
256	19	piep	pipe
256	41	specialor contributions	special contributions
258	35	or persons	or disabled persons
261	21	forbade	forbid
264	19	year students	year secondary students
271	32	to this own	to their own
281	38	representation on the one hand and	representation and
284	28	village's	villagers'
285	39	official	royal
301	9	recommendations (?) must	recommendations must
302	28	The Representative Council	The Representative of the Council

Annex: Village Government in Viet Nam

3	final	of Than Nong	Dong Dinh Quan, the Than Long
12	28	devide	device
15	footnote	(insert: 25 Vu Quoc Thong, op.cit.,p.36.)	
19	11	Thanh	Thang
38	28	shape of a hyperbola	line of a bell-shaped curve

The Village Security System

It is to be assumed that the village security system included both visible and invisible--that is, to the eye of a layman such as the writer--divisions, and therefore that this study itself, dealing only with the former, could not begin to tell the whole story about security administration. All that it can do is to examine the portion that had been exposed to the general public and with which all villagers probably were familiar.

The village system, as the writer saw it, was divided into three main parts: the information and propaganda activities; the physical security organization; and the more customary (from the viewpoint of the writer) activities of a village police officer, those involving enforcement of laws and the settling of minor disputes. As mentioned earlier, the conduct of security was the responsibility of two members of the Village Council--the Police Chief and the Civil Status Councillor who had been assigned the additional duty of Information Agent. This duty prior to 1957 had belonged to the Police Chief, it was transferred at the request of the Village Council in order (a) to lighten the work load of the Police Chief and (b), the writer suspects, to obtain a more adequate salary for the Civil Status Councillor.

Information and Propaganda Activities

The System. Once any information had been received in the village for "universalization," the term usually found on the covering letters, the task of distribution became the responsibility of the Information Agent. Various channels were available and several might be used for the same communication. At the village level, there was the blackboard in the Village Hall, and a special board on which to place posters; in addition, the walls of the Hall itself sometimes served as bulletin boards. Also adjacent to the Village Hall was the "model information" hall in which could be found copies of the various propaganda posters widely distributed throughout Viet Nam, containing such subjects as photos of the President visiting newly dug canals, new factories, and refugee settlement centers. Apart from other village level organizations, such as the Youth Group, the political party and the public school, the village Information Agent had his own information network consisting of the hamlet chiefs and heads of the five family groups. Contact with the hamlets would be made via members of the Self-Guard serving as special messengers or directly by the Information Agent himself going to the hamlets.

In addition to special meetings that might be held either in the Village Hall or in hamlet homes to explain propaganda bulletins to the next lower exchelon, there were two regular meetings held which all villagers--at least all adults--were expected to attend. Both were called "Anti-Communist Denunciation Meetings." Every Saturday evening all hamlets were required to hold such a meeting; and once a month at the time of the full moon (which the writer concluded after being present on one such occasion, was chosen because of the natural illumination rather than because of any mystical value) a village-wide meeting was held under the auspices of the Village Council and the village Anti-Communist Denunciation Committee. This committee of 24 members whose membership chart was well framed and displayed in the village hall was described by the Village Chief as containing the "elite" of the village. Topics for these meetings normally were chosen by higher authorities who forwarded discussion materials to the Information Agent. Discussion leaders for the hamlet groups were to be chosen by the Hamlet Chiefs and for the village meeting by the special committee, although the Hamlet Chiefs and the Village Chief served as chairmen for their respective meetings. Recent topics for the weekly meetings, according to the Information Agent who seemed somewhat hesitant in his willingness to reply concerned (1) the cruel treatment given to residents in North Viet Nam and (2) the program of military service for the Republic itself.

While it probably would have been difficult to obtain a reasonably accurate view of the discussion meetings throughout the village, there was no difficulty relative to the printed materials that had been prepared for posting. From the moment one approached the Village he became aware of the familiar propaganda slogans found along the national highway as well as in the major cities. Likewise, as will be described, additional propaganda as well as information materials were found in the Village Hall and in the hamlet information posts.

It would be fair to say that on a typical day a villager walking along the village road from Ap Dinh "B" to the Village Hall would see various signs, some freshly painted in the colors of Viet Nam, yellow and red, carrying the following propaganda slogans, as the writer observed one day shortly before the 1959 Assembly elections in August:

-- We request the government to firmly punish the communist rebels who are plotting arson, killing, pillage and destruction of agricultural crops.

-- To join the Farmers' Association is to raise the people's living standards.

-- We are determined to crush the Communists who are attempting assassinations, kidnapping and arson against the people.

-- Improve agricultural production.

-- Down with aggressive schemes engineered by Soviet Russia and Red China. Down with the Viet Cong engaging in pillage, assassination and arson against their compatriots.

-- The Farmers' Association will increase agricultural output.

Also because of the coming election he would have noted several special banners along the road bearing such slogans as:

-- There are no elections under colonialism.

-- Election of the second National Assembly demonstrates our allegiance to the Constitution.

-- There are no elections without independence and democracy.

As he entered the Village Hall he might have seen an announcement written on the large wooden blackboard standing near the entrance such as the schedule for the next military draft call and the name of a young girl who had been found by the provincial authorities and was being held in the provincial offices until her parents could be found. Generally announcements that were not urgent received their dirst distribution in this way, the Information Agent explained. Next, on one section of a wall marked, "Announcements," the villager could read a great variety of printed, mimeographed and typewritten notices, from provincial offices throughout Viet Nam as well as from central governmental offices (Described in more detail in Chapter III.)

On his return trip to his own hamlet the villager, if he stopped in a hamlet information post, could note additional propaganda posters as well as announcements of current affairs although the selection would be far less. The post in Hamlet Moi a few days before the 1959 election in addition to containing the large wall posters for all five candidates bore the slogans: "We request the Military Courts to be established soon to mete out death sentences to the Viet Cong saboteurs." and "Community development and rural rehabilitation are aimed at upholding the 'personalistic' republican regime." Almost

always found in such places as the Village Hall and information posts were portrait pictures of the President and slogans such as "Long Live the Republic of Viet Nam and Long Live President Ngo."

An illustration of a Study Program. From observations of activities in the Village Hall and examination of the correspondence files, it became evident that at least for some occasions the central government had gone to considerable effort to prepare and to bring to the village level a fairly adequate understanding of certain propaganda, including explanations of new governmental activities. On one occasion a District Information Agent spent more than an hour with the Hamlet Chiefs explaining a self-study pamphlet about the Constitution of the Republic. Another self-study program concerned the installation of the public opinion boxes. A complete copy of the study materials has been included as Appendix "D." Some of its features and its implementation will be briefly described.

As the cover letter shows, this material was sent out from the office of the provincial information service not only to all village information chiefs (through the channel of the district chief) but also to the elementary schools and heads of the self-guard and the district information services. Meetings were to be held in "all circles" for discussing this new program. Village Information Agents were to meet first with District Agents for an intensive study and then to "universalize" the message, which was defined in this instance as "house by house." In addition it was to be read during the weekly hamlet meetings. Also as one can note by turning to Appendix "D," the message itself was well prepared in that its contents were divided into several meaningful sections: "Significance and Aim," "How to Use Them," "Secrecy and Security are Safeguarded," and "The Authorities' Attitude Toward the People's Letters of Opinions."

In Khanh Hau Village, as reported to the writer by the deputy village chief, the procedure apparently differed slightly from that given in the cover letter, although his memory might have failed him on this question. As he recalled the announcement, it was first made during one of the regular monthly village level denunciation meetings by a District Information Agent. Shortly thereafter, hamlet level meetings were conducted by the district agent and members of the Village Council. The actual division of duties could not be recalled. The same subject was, however, introduced later on during the weekly hamlet meetings. Parenthetically it should be added that, for whatever the reason might be, according to

the Village Chief, the public opinion boxes had never been used for their announced purpose. The locked boxes were taken twice a month to the district office for opening.

An Observation About The Monthly Anti-Communist Meetings

It is not wise to offer any generalizations on the basis of a severely limited examination; however, the writer does want to mention the possibility of a paradox that seemed to be developing.

In November, 1958, the UNESCO representative at the Fundamental School called upon the Village Chief to suggest that a meeting be held with the village "notability" for the purpose of discussing community development plans for the coming year. The UNESCO representative told the writer the morning of the conference, he anticipated that the attendance would be quite low and that he did not want a large meeting, just leaders. In order to see what type of an announcement had been made about this meeting, on the same day the writer asked the head of one five family group if a special meeting had been announced for that day. The answer was "No"--no special meeting but the monthly anti-communist meeting would be held. As to the specific subject, he had no idea but someone would "denounce" Communism, he added. And he also added that attendance at the meeting was compulsory for all chiefs of the five family groups. Thus, assuming he was a typical villager in this case, there he was heading for a "compulsory" meeting which, in fact, turned out to be a session devoted to exploring ideas for improving the community rather than anti-communism as such. And it was a relatively large gathering--about 200 villagers.

What had happened is, of course, easy to surmise. The Village Chief had decided to take advantage of the regular monthly meeting as the occasion for discussing community development projects. What was unfortunate about his action, however, was his failure to notify the "grass roots" of the subject so that hamlet discussions might have preceded the meeting or at least so that the normal attendees would have been coming with a different frame of reference. Yet the Chief also might be criticized for combining the two since, the writer believes, spontaneity of ideas is more difficult to encourage when one is attending an obligatory meeting.

Although the evidence is frail, what this example suggested to the writer in the form of a paradox is the possibility of a changing role in the function of the weekly and monthly meetings when compared with the practice of the government to introduce security matters during the conduct of other meetings, such as those previously described, that is, the meetings for the

organization of the farmers association. It may be that more and more the regular meetings will be used for non-political, community purposes although the title and the pattern still bear the anti-communist denunciation label. If so, some re-evaluation of the labels and the compulsory attendance rule may be appropriate.

The Physical Security Organization

It would not be facetious to suggest that the physical security organization for the village contained a force of some 1,500 or more members since every responsible adult was expected to serve continually as an observer--there was to be no such event as an unreported stranger in the village. This was especially true for those who gave signs of staying overnight. And within this 1,500 there were somewhere between 800 and 1,000 (although the writer has not checked census data as such) who were probably performing additional "guard" duties either or both as members of hamlet guard units or as participants in the five family groups. Thus, picturing the whole village as a fairly militant security-minded organization does not fall far outside the realm of reasonableness.

It has already been said that the Police Councillor was in charge of the security system although, to be sure, closely related to his own work was that of the village Information Agent. However, since the latter was a lower-ranking member of the Village Council, it is fair to assume that in case of any disagreement between the two the matter would probably be decided in favor of the former. But it should also be pointed out that correspondence from higher authorities about such matters as the village guard system was not addressed to the Police Chief but to the Village Council, even when other functional specialists had been included in the list of addresses. For example a typical letter included the following security administrators and the village councils rather than village police chiefs: district civil guard commander, district security chief, chief of district self-guard, police station chief (in the district town) and then the village councils. Of course, it is also fair to assume that once the correspondence reached the village it was turned over to the Police Chief.

To administer the physical security system the Police Chief had under his command three separate organizations: the Village Self-Guard, the hamlet Self-Defense Corps, and the Five Family units. In addition, he was assisted by the six Hamlet Chiefs, who served as his "generalists" at the hamlet level. Apparently, it is interesting to note, his working relationships with the Hamlet Chiefs so predominated village-hamlet relationships in general that villagers had come to view the hamlet chiefs as being under the command of the Police Chief.

rather than under the Village Chief or the Village Council.[5] This attitude was pointed up by one villager who was asked to prepare an organization chart for the village council. The results of his work--as he visualized the organization (The writer was told that he had not been given any specific instructions.) of the Council and its relationships to the hamlets--are shown in the following chart. As indicated in the chart, this villager recognized the Village Chief as being in command of the Village Council and in general command, it might be said, of the lower echelons--the Hamlet Chiefs and the Five Family units. But in terms of direct or immediate command, the villager viewed the line of authority as extending from the Police Councillor on down, thus putting all the lower units within his direction.

The Village Self-Guard. Of these three security units the Village Self-Guard, that is, the guard unit with village wide responsibilities, had the closest resemblance to an organized military unit. It could be viewed as a squad of soldiers stationed within the village. Its members wore black cloth uniforms purchased with governmental funds; they received monthly salaries amounting to 900$ each; they carried bolt-action rifles; they had or would be receiving training at the Civil Guard training base; and they were given quarters in the village Guard Barracks.

In contrast to regular military, however, they were under the command of the village Police Chief; it was expected that most of the members would be villagers; no military draft as such existed, membership was entirely voluntary; normal duties extended beyond those typically identified with military programs; and as has been mentioned in the earlier discussion about village organization, the central office or the supreme command was located not in the Defense Department but in the Executive Office of the President.

As to their actual work in Khanh Hau little information was obtained beyond that already mentioned in the earlier chapter. In addition to maintaining the observation posts adjacent to the Village Hall, it was reported that the Guard gave assistance to village officials by serving as messengers between the Village Hall and the Hamlets. Also when tax collections were being made, some of the guard would accompany

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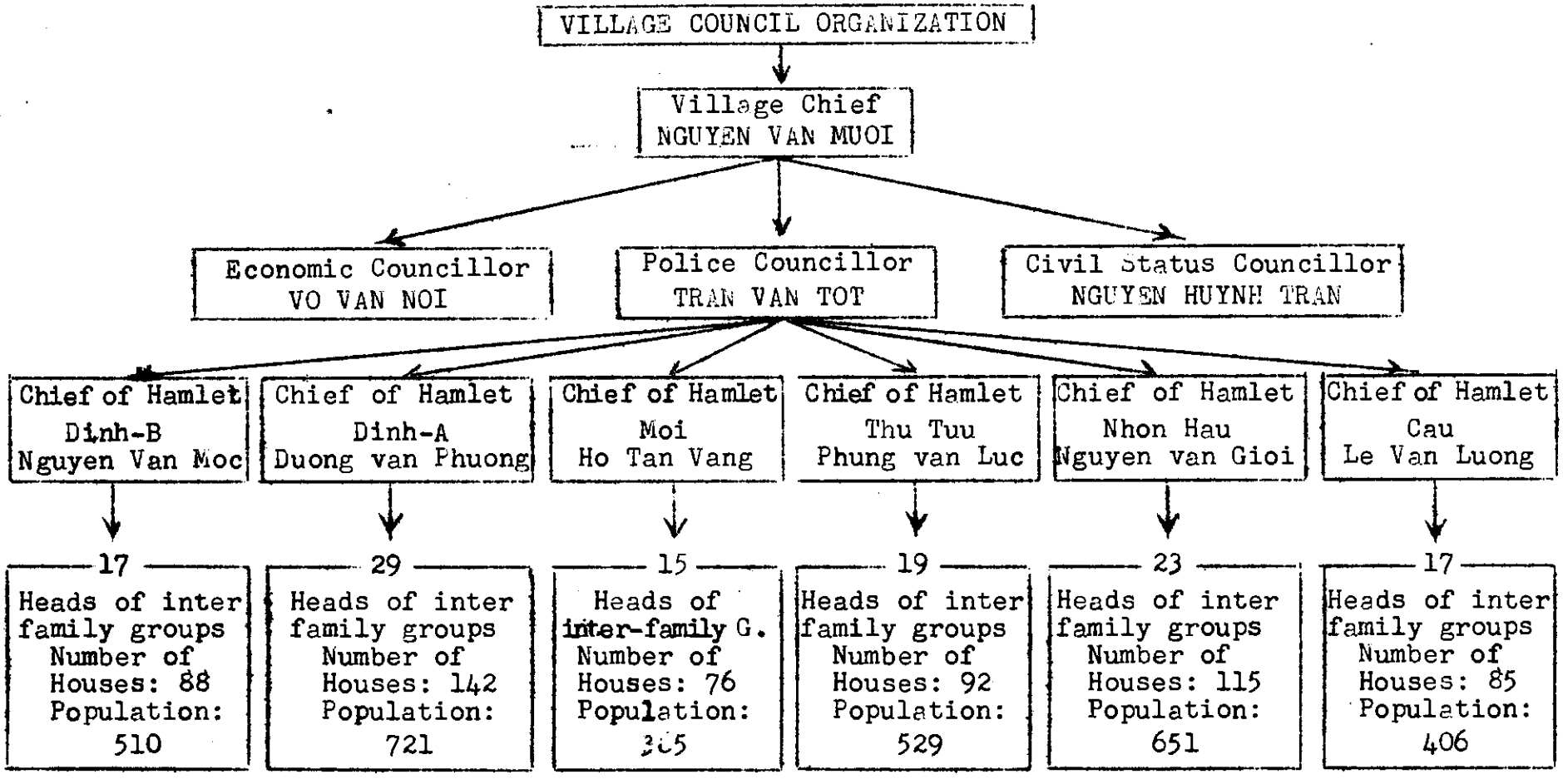
[5]The evolution of the hamlet chief undoubtedly also contributed to this graphic portrayal. As the village Police Councillor explained to the writer, in the pre-World War II council the hamlet chiefs were assistants to the huong quan or police chief.

Figure 22

The Importance of the Village Police Chief in Village-Hamlet Relationships as Reflected in an Organization Chart Drawn by a Villager - 1959



Total (literal translation): 4-member Council; 6 Chiefs of Hamlets; 120 Inter-family Groups; 589 houses; Population: 3,152.

the Village Council member. This was viewed by the Councillors, however, as much as a means for "impressing" stubborn taxpayers as it was for security. It was also mentioned that the Guard had been used to help in some construction projects. "Some" assistance was given during the construction of the first canal and "some"help had been given when villagers had helped some families to rebuild their destroy home.

The Hamlet Self-Defense Corps. As stated earlier, this corps was organized on a hamlet basis with the Hamlet Chief being in command of his local force although he customarily appointed group leaders that served with their respective shifts. Unlike the village organization, membership was neither voluntary nor paid. All "young men" defined as those between the ages of 18 and 45 were required to serve unless specifically exempted by authority higher than the village level. Exemptions included, in addition to physical handicaps, certain occupational and organizational positions. Members, for example, of the executive council in the Youth Organization had been exempted. The broad objective was to serve as a nightwatch.

The equipment used by the hamlet guards could not be considered adequate for any major defensive operation. Each guard when on duty was expected to carry a long stick measuring about two meters and one and one-half meter rope. Each squad had at the guard post (which was also the information and propaganda post) a bamboo or wooden drum for signaling the Village Guard. With this arrangement, rather than enter into combat, it was expected to relay any warnings of attack in private homes onward to village self-guard. For this work no special training had been given the guard members other than some orientation lectures as to their purpose. One drill for an entire hamlet had, however, been held in recent times--the drill came in the form of a surprise mock attack led by the District Chief.

While the equipment was not adequate for any major attack, neither had the need arisen. According to Hamlet Chiefs in Ap Dinh "A" and "B" no alarms had been given during the entire period--about three years--of the guard system, other than at the time when the District Chief had sent two disguised men into one Hamlet in July or August, 1958, to see how far they could penetrate without being discovered. That the Hamlet Guard would have been ready for combat was indicated by the comment of the Hamlet Chief: "Nobody in the village had been told of this test so the two men might have been injured." Shortly after the alarm had been given, the men were "saved" by the arrival of informed members of the District Civil Guard as well as the Village Self-Guard.

While each Hamlet had a similar basic plan of operation, it appeared that some differences occurred in actual procedures. In one hamlet the entire squad that was on duty assumed responsibility for maintaining the guard post as well as making periodic patrols, one or two during each night. In contrast, in another hamlet the duty squad maintained only the guard post. As one villager explained, special patrols were made by a "secret" squad of permanent members under the immediate direction of the Hamlet Chief. This squad, he said, might lie in waiting in some bushes or move around the Hamlet.

The function of the village Police Chief with respect to the Hamlet Guards was to serve as a general coordinator and as the liaison, of course, with higher agencies such as the District Guard Units. Insofar as the writer could determine there seemed to be no problems of inter-hamlet relationships within the village. The recognized problem, as stated by the Police Chief, concerned inter-village guard activities--"hot pursuit" could not be achieved because it was necessary to obtain permission from at least the Police Chief of the adjoining unit before a Hamlet Guard could enter. This requirement was needed in order to avoid confusing neighboring guard units with enemy forces, the Police Chief explained. The problem was partly resolved for one border by a mutual agreement giving Khanh Hau village and its hamlet guards jurisdiction over several isolated houses located on the opposite bank of the boundary stream. As the Police Chief stated, "I talked this over with the other village police chief when we met at a conference sometime ago." Following the conference, he had prepared a memorandum reminding the other chief of the oral agreement.

The Security Functions of the Five Family Units. With all houses in the Village organized into units or blocs of five each, it was not difficult to arrange a close system of surveillance, (assuming, of course, that the heads or at least the five-family heads were loyal) over the movement of strangers in and out of the hamlet settlements. According to one head, it was his duty to be aware of all strangers in the area of his five houses. If a stranger intended to stay no more than two days, the head could grant permission. For longer periods, the Hamlet Chief and Village Council had to be contacted--the Hamlet was allowed to grant extensions up to 30 days.[6]

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[6]Facilitating control of movement was the requirement of the central government that each family head must have available for inspection a copy of the official family declaration form on which was listed all members of the household. In some homes this list was posted on a main supporting timber; in others it was stored in some convenient place.

Law Enforcement and Justice

When not involved in some matter concerning the Village Self-Guard, the Hamlet Self-Defense Corps or the Five Family system, the Police Chief might be found handling some of the more ordinary aspects of law enforcement including the settlement of minor violations. However, on the basis of observations in the village, it cannot be said that law enforcement as such was a major, time-consuming function. In part, of course, the function overlapped with general security affairs--a hamlet patrol also reported on such non-security matters as a gambling game in a private home, presumably since the holding of any meetings without permission of the village council was in violation of security regulations. Observations did point up, however, that in the realm of ordinary law enforcement the village chief did come into contact with a variety of enforcement matters stemming from higher authorities and coming to the village through the customary communication channel of correspondence and did serve as a local justice of the peace. Of all the observations obtained about law enforcement in Khanh Hau, the most interesting were the examples of minor cases as they were being settled by the Police Chief with the assistance of other councillors. These will be described since they illustrate village practices of adjudication.

The low rate of crime was quite startling. Although the District Chief had described the village as being "tranquil," it was not until the village Police Chief had stated the number of arrests for a year that the degree became apparent: in 1957 only one arrest was made and later on that charge was dismissed. The case had concerned a villager who had become intoxicated and "disturbed" some other villagers: the Police Chief explained he could get the villager under control only by arresting and taking him to the district. To be sure the low rate might have existed on paper only--crimes might not have been officially reported. However, even the rate of fines assessed locally for misdemeanors clearly supported the reputation of the Village. As shown in Figure 9A in Chapter IV, revenues from fines during the three year period did not exceed 400$ for anyone year. The monthly average was about 25$ yet it should also be noted that no payments were received during 20 of the 36 months.7

7After the field work had been completed, the writer heard of one major incident that ended, however, in an acquital. In a fistfight, one villagers caused the death of his opponent by shoving him so that he fell and hit his head against some rocks. According to the explanation received from other villagers, the court decided that the death was not caused directly by the defendant. It was anticipated by some villagers that the defendant might receive a life sentence; however, he was released and returned to the Village. Also, as is in part illustrated later on in "Village Justice," there were at times enforcement problems concerned with handling of drunkards. In addition, it became apparent that at times gambling became a "problem."

As to the legal basis for village law enforcement, it was not feasible to explore this beyond a minimum distance since it became apparent that the subject would soon become far more complex than the final product--some citations and brief background explanations--would merit. It is not unfair to say that the Police Chief knew very little about the legalities as such. As he said in a general discussion about his role, he was the assistant of the District Chief in administrative aspects of law enforcement and of the courts in judicial aspects.

And as an examination of correspondence from these authorities showed, the Police Chief was not receiving copies of newly enacted laws to be enforced but rather departmental regulations, and orders from the District Chief and the courts. Yet without any significant training in law enforcement other than that accruing from frequent contacts with higher authorities, the village Police Chief seemed to possess a proper spirit for his role.

From the viewpoint of the writer making limited and sporadic visits to the seat of village administration, the Village Hall, among the various activities of the Police Chief the most observable was his participation in the settlement of cases. These were cases presumably involving minor violations which could be settled within the confines of the Village. Although the Police Chief was not aware of the statute establishing such a jurisdiction, it is likely that the basis was a provision of the 1927 general village council law or one similar to it.[8]

This early law allowed the Village Council to impose up to five days of guard duty for violations that (a) village customs or (b) obligations imposed by the Administration when the act was not of sufficient importance to bring to the attention of the higher authorities. In lieu of serving the sentence, the violator could pay a fine not to exceed the ordinary rate followed in the charges for exemption from the corvée. Apparently over the years the practice in Khanh Hau had become modified so that by 1958 the Village Council considered that it could impose both penalties as the maximum punishment--according to the Village Chief, the Council could impose a maximum fine of 120$ and up to five days labor (rather than, as stipulated in the early law, guard duty).

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[8]Article 11, "Pouvoirs Disciplinaires du Conseil des Notables et ses Membres; Suspension et Revocation des Notables," Titre III, Arrete Concernant La Reforme Communale En Cochinchine, Octobre 30, 1957, Saigon.

Before describing the minor cases "tried" by the Police Chief, a general view of law enforcement matters can be fairly well obtained from noting the subjects of correspondence found in the general "incoming" and "outgoing" correspondence files of the village council, during the three month periods of January through March, 1957 and 1958. While this examination cannot portray the entire gamut of enforcement activities, nevertheless it illustrates the types of subjects that were processed via correspondence; and given the limited communication facilities, especially the lack of telephones and daily conferences, the correspondence files can be expected to have touched on a great proportion of the subjects confronted by the Police Chief.

Outgoing Correspondence. Perhaps indicative of his role as an "assistant" to the District Chief in administrative police affairs was the exception in the general practice of signing communications. While most correspondence in non-police subjects was signed by three or more members of the Village Council, more ordinarily, correspondence received only the signature of the Police Councillor. Exceptions to this, in turn, occurred only when an apparent reason could also be determined--such as when the subject dealt with a field of direct interest to some other Councillor: for example, a request submitted to the District Chief for permission to bury a three-year old child who had drowned in a rice field was signed by the Civil Status Councillor as well. His interest concerned the issuance of the death certificates.

1. Requests for Special Assistance. Insofar as the writer could determine only one request had been made for special assistance in normal law enforcement activities. In 1957 the Village Police Chief sought assistance from the District Chief in order to eliminate a gambling ring in one Hamlet. According to the note, the hamlet contained a "well-guarded" game. Apparently the Police Chief had already successfully raided the game--but for the first offence, rather than arrest the homeowner, he had only demanded a statement of guilt.[9]

2. Reports. Most of the reports concerned the completion of some request made by the courts, in particular the processing of summons. As examples, others concerned vehicle accidents on the national highway, completion of some investigation, and the preparation of a certificate of behavior.

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[9]Whether related to this or not, three months later the district chief sent out a general latter expressing his concern about the gambling problem and offering his own services for making the arrests.

In essence what the four reports about highway accidents showed was an illustration of one enforcement agency reporting to its superior about the work of another enforcement agency. To wit, the village Police Chief seemed to be reporting to the District Chief about the activities of the Gendarmerie and his working relationships with that agency. It was evident that the Police Chief sometimes worked closely with this rural police unit. As the reports stated, the Police Chief had given it control over a hit-and-run driver who had abandoned his car and fled into one of the hamlet settlements, and on another occasion the Gendarmerie had stopped a vehicle which the Police Chief had reported for failing to stop and give aid to a passenger who had fallen from another vehible.

Although not numerous, reports on behavior of villagers were sometimes sent to other enforcement agencies, more often to the Gendarmerie in answer to specific requests. These reports in the form of a certificate of behavior were needed by the individual before employment could be obtained in another village. They served both as a means for controlling the movement of villagers and for checking on their recent activities.

3. Confirmation of Oral Agreement On Inter-Village Jurisdiction. This agreement has already been mentioned relative to the problem of hamlet and village guard patrols. From the viewpoint of administrative practices, it is interesting as it illustrates one way in which two villages made their own mutual agreement regarding adjusting their boundaries for law enforcement. The letter itself was simply a reminder of the oral agreement that had been previously made to allow Khanh Hau to supervise certain houses located adjacent to one hamlet. According to the Police Chief when asked later about this agreement, it was the only one of its kind for Khanh Hau. While it did not officially change the status of the villages, he indicated no hesitancy in making arrests-even though the area was located even in another district--and taking any violators to his own immediate superior. Officially, he admitted, arrests should be made by the officers of the other administrative unit.

Incoming Correspondence. The bulk of the correspondence dealing with law enforcement fell into the "incoming" classification. For the purpose of examination it can be divided into two categories of "personnel and materiel," and "general announcements." However, a great variety of items is to be found in each.

1. Personnel and Materiel. Rather than attempt to generalize about these, it is more informative to give some specific examples showing the nature of the communication as well as the source. Most of these, it should be noted, were addressed to all villages rather to Khanh Hau. The District Chief sent a general letter asking for information about any of the violators listed therein--apparently these were persons who had been apprehended by the police in Saigon. At another time the District Chief sent a list of violators and asked the villages to notify any of their relatives to contact the district headquarters. From the Chief of the municipal police in the Province came a letter through the District Chief asking the Village Council to invite a named woman to visit the province town police station for questioning. Also from the province town came a letter of the Gendarmerie asking for a certificate of behavior for a named person. And from the chief of another province came a general letter listing the name of an escaped prisoner.

With regard to "material," various letters were received from private companies as well as from the police. For example, the provincial office of Shell Oil Company sent a copy of their request to sell ten barrels of oil to a specifically named store in the village--the original had been sent to the chief of province. Two days later a letter from the District Chief included the necessary authorization for the sale, but requested the Village to check on the use of the oil. In two other communications the District Chief asked for information about any property belonging to an identified violator who had been living in Saigon and in the second he asked for assistance in apprehending persons attempting to speculate on consumer goods as a result of some changes in tax policies.

2. General Announcements. In addition to communications dealing with specifically named persons, the Village received various announcements about lost and found goods, changes in administrative regulations, new provisions for punishing certain types of violators, etc. Many of these would include a specific request that the announcement be "universalized." Some would be addressed not only to the village councils but also to the information agents. Once the lost items had been found, it was also apparently customary for the agency to send out notices to stop the search. For example, the Municipal Police Chief in the province reported that the owner had found the "brown bag" for which earlier announcements had been made. Similar statements came about bicycles, not only from Long An Province but from a neighboring province.

The following typify the pattern of regulations that provincial and higher authorities asked to be universalized. The District Chief wanted the villages to warn all farmers not to move any of the marking poles in the rice fields. The national Department of Justice distributed an announcement regarding punishment to be given arsonists. Similarly the central governmental Department of Public Works and Communications sent out a regulation regarding automobile headlights. The Long An Province Chief announced the official price of newspapers, the intent of the government to punish violators, and his request for villagers to report all violations. The central governmental Department of Information stated the need for obtaining approval before taking certain types of movies. One modification of the general announcements asked for "implementation" as well as "universalization"--the Department of Public Works and Communication sought cooperation in restricting the use of certain colors for painting private automobiles.

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In the opinion of the writer one characteristic that the pattern of correspondence to and from the village pointed up was the "field agent" role played by the village in relationship to many governmental departments, as illustrated herein by the memorandums from such agencies as the Department of Public Works and Communication, the Department of Information, the Department of Interior, and Department of Justice. All of these agencies appealed, in effect, to the village councils to carry out their wishes, whether these were for more information, implementation, or general education.

In view of this pattern, what seemed to be lacking from the viewpoint of village administration was any special system of filing so as to keep abreast of changes and of the status of various inquiries such as the lost and found items. All such correspondence was, instead, simply placed in the one file of "incoming correspondence," subdivided only by the year.

Village Justice. If the examination of law enforcement were to be separated from that of the local administration of justice, one would fail to obtain the proper perspective of the role of the village Police Chief in Khanh Hau. Law enforcement practices, at least as described in the preceding pages, indicate the more or less "errand boy" aspects of village level police. Central, provincial, and district superiors were continually presenting orders and requests to the village Police Chief. Seemingly almost all of his enforcement duties were directed from above. It is in the realm of adjudication, however, that one can find a counterbalance to this theme.

It is here that the Police Chief--with the guidance at times of other council members--exercised much more self-judgment on meaningful questions. It is here, in short, that an observer like the writer would get some reminder of local self-administration.

This examination of village justice consists largely of descriptions of cases that were being tried in the village hall during hours that the writer and his interpreter happened to be present. There is no basis for suggesting they were necessarily typical or atypical of the types of cases viewed over a period of time. But he is inclined to believe that, at least, the technique of examination typified the general pattern, because the research method did not disrupt the procedure--the writer did not attempt to display interest in the proceedings; instead, he instructed his interpreter to record the discussions as unostensibly as possible. Thus, much of what follows can be viewed as a close approximation to the actual discussions.

The setting for these cases was quite informal. There was no court room as such; and in fact there hardly appeared to be a judge. The participants in some instances merely happened to be in the village hall. Sometimes discussion continued with no one necessarily in charge. In one case a non-involved villager offered his comments from time to time. While the discussions were going on, other village officials were busying themselves with their own work at their desks but occasionally they, too, would offer some comment. Visitors having business in the hall were coming and going all the time.

About the only formalized aspects of procedure that could be noted were the practice of the village Police Chief to encourage the defendants and witnesses to make written declarations, and, as the village Council Chief explained, the recognition by other council members that the final decision belonged to the Chief of Police although others could indicate their views.

1. The Drunkard, the Banana Tree, and Ke Hien. The case though very brief was especially interesting since it directly involved the Ke Hien, the most honored and respected villager. It indicated to the writer that this village leader respected the authority of the village administrative officialdom to settle a case in which he himself was the injured party. In view of his supreme position in the social organization, the writer was not certain whether he would take charge of the case or leave it in the hands of the Council.

The case itself was quite minor. As the Village Chief explained, the defendant, a relatively poor farmer in the village, while drunk, cut down a banana tree that he had planted sometime ago when working for the Ke Hien. In addition on the same day he had thrown some stones at the son of the Ke Hien. What motivated these actions was not made known to the writer.

On the following day, when the writer entered the Village Hall, the defendant was on his knees before the Ke Hien begging for forgiveness. Shortly thereafter, followed some discussion, the defendant again went down on his knees, kowtowed three or so times before the Ke Hien and left the Village Hall. Obviously most of the "case" had been presented prior to the writers arrival.

The interpreter, however, obtained the following conversation. As the defendant was kowtowing, the Ke Hien said, "I cannot help you. It is up to the Council to punish or forgive you." Following the departure of the defendant, the Village Chief with an obvious smile addressed the Ke Hien, "You already have age, children, money, so you lack only one thing--good luck for your future life. This is now an occasion for you to do something good which will bring you good luck."

As the interpreter reported the close, with hardly more than a confirming nod from the Ke Hien the Village Council Chief and other Councillors present agreed to pardon the laborer with the exception that he must work five days for the Village and swear that from that day forward he would never again commit an act of insolence against anyone. (Presumably, of course, the final decision was yet to be made by the Police Chief himself.)

2. The Drunkard and the Police Chief. On another day in the Village Hall the Police Chief was confronted with the problem of what type of punishment to give a villager who apparently had established himself fairly well as one who imbibed too much too often. While the final outcome of this case was not found out, the "proceedings" of one conversation give some basis for appreciating the judicial function of the Police Chief.

As the writer entered the village hall, he noticed the villager pacing to and fro near the Police Chief, stopping at times to talk with him. Then, if ignored, he would continue by addressing himself to the Village Chief. According to the interpreter, all the time he was begging the officials to forgive him for his drunkenness. When he talked with the Village Chief, the only reply he received was "Talk to the Police Chief." At one point the following took place.

The defendant to the Police Chief: I apologize... I am so hungry... Would you pardon me so that I may go home and have breakfast?

To this the police chief reported: Is this the first time? No, no, tens of times. And each time you express the same regret. Don't you know that you have constantly been disturbing the public order, violating regulations and offending good citizens of this village? We have advised you once, twice, and then tens of times to get rid of your evil, haven't we?

And to that the villager quietly replied "Yes."

The threat was then made to send him to the District Chief.

The Police Chief went on to say, "When you were drunk, you fought with others. You beat your brothers for they reported to me and I went to help them. You even attempted to disarm the guards and threatened to kill me. We are going to send you to the District Chief who will send you off for rehabilitation for sometime so that when you come back you will be a good villager."

At this point putting still more fear into the villager, one of the close friends of the Village Council (who months later was appointed Village Clerk) read aloud the written charges being prepared and the defendant listened attentively: "disturbing public order, attempting to disarm the self-guard, beating his mother and his brothers..."

But, then, at this climax, the Police Chief altered the route and became more sympathetic:

It is not up to me to release you. If I did that, then you would beat your mother again and she would complain that the Council has not taken appropriate measures to stop you. It is up to your mother and brothers to decide whether you should be sent off.

In an even more sympathetic voice, the Police Chief went on to say, "Come on to the guard post and have lunch with the guards." But the villager replied, "I could not eat." As he explained he earlier had said he was hungry since he had wanted to go home. The Police Chief closed the "hearing" with the politely extended invitation, "Come and have lunch with the guards."

3. The Illegal Gathering. The line between security and general law enforcement would be almost impossible to draw, of course. As the following incident illustrates, a potential "security" problem was handled as a local law enforcement problem instead since the local officials were familiar with its background. But as they themselves warned the villagers, it might have been a far more serious matter-a "security problem"-if the guard forces from the adjoining village had come upon the violators.

As background for this incident it should be mentioned that with the fall of darkness comes the end of free movement within the village. A curfew was in effect from 2000 hours until 0500. Only if a villager carried a lamp was he allowed to go out of his home during this period. The type of punishment to be imposed for violating this, the Chief of Police explained, would depend upon the circumstances: a first offense would be a warning; the second, a fine; and repeated violations would lead to the arrest which would mean sending the violator to the District Chief for punishment. Along with this curfew requirement was, as the following illustrates, the need for obtaining approval in advance for any meetings in the homes. (This requirement applied in the metropolitan community of Saigon as well as in the remote villages.)

Present in the Village Hall were four men and the Deputy Chief seated around the oblong table and the Police Chief seated nearby. The discussion was opened by the Deputy Chief: "Your son last night?"

Old man: "Yes"

Deputy chief: "Where did he go?"

Old man: "To the movies, then he came back home. He was invited to go up there by another youngster."

Deputy chief: "Parents should educate children, or they will have to bear all of the disastrous consequences. It was our own guards who seized the youngsters, you know. If it had been other guards, your son (pointing to the old man) might have been killed. He ran off when called upon to halt.

At this point the Police Chief moved over and joined the Deputy Chief with the four villagers at the large table.

Deputy Chief: I invited your brothers here this morning for a purpose: settlement of the incident. Let us consider if your son was behaving properly--was he joining an illegal gathering or was he misled? Then you and I will take steps to insure that he changes in such a menner that he will become a good citizen.

Villager B: I just don't go there /apparently meaning the edge of the village where the incident occurred/ at any time without a purpose; I never wander in that area! I told them to get a lamp if they were going to be out after the curfew hour.

Deputy Chief: (Somewhat cynically): You know the punishment for stealing lasts for a definite period of time--one month, two months, five months imprisonment. But this is not a case of theft or the like. For this no date is set for one to return home.

At this point the conversation stopped for a minute or more and then the Deputy Chief continued with a statement reflecting, perhaps, his personal moral and political philosophy: "The highest virtue is to be a good citizen which is conformity with the regime under which one is living. That's all."

Then another villager came into the Hall--the father of the boy who had invited the others to his home. And the Police Chief entered the discussion for the first time, addressing his comments to the newcomer.

Police Chief: The purpose of the gathering was to enjoy music? You must know that if I had met you last night I would have "invited" you to the guard post. Illegal gathering means illegal music.

Deputy Chief: With a definite smile: "People know well how to kill a disease but they ignore how to prevent it. Effective medicine will heal a wound. Yes. But a scar will remain forever visible."

Villager B: They gathered right on the border of Loi Binh Nhon village--that area!

Police Chief: in a softer voice than before: The Council suggested that a 30 piaster fine be imposed on you /that is, on the father of the young host/. As for the other boys, two days of labor so they will come to understand that unauthorized gatherings are bound to bring about unpleasant consequences.

Deputy Chief: A request for an authorization [to hold a meeting]... whose advantage is it? The Village Council's? Look at the work involved--the signatures and seal. There is no advantage for the Council to do all of that, but it is a guarantee for you: conformity with the regulations.

Police Chief: I had told them to gather only at the hamlet guard post or the village guard house. Minutes later, two carloads of guards came. What would have happened if we had not been on the spot! All the boys fled. On a nice moonlight night like that why not come out and carry earth to build the foundation for the new tomb?

Villager C: The "organizer" [presumably the young son] should get three days of labor.

Villager B: "Music. Drink. That makes one tired and it costs much in oil. Then the next morning you can not work well." Then addressing himself to the father of the organizer, "That border region, you know is 'severe' [that is, closely guarded]."

Police Chief, addressing the same man and carefully stating his question, "I ask you, as owner of the house, was it your fault that your son illegally organized that gathering?"

The houseowner replied "Yes. I admit it. But I was not home at the time. When I came back, I found the meals still untouched. That was a regrettable incident."

Villager B: Why not wait until daytime, until this morning--when the flocks of ducks were sold, the small ones remained--to treat others at lunch time? Why in such a hurry to treat?

Police Chief: I am glad you admit your fault since you are the houseowner.

Villager B: I was not aware of the incident until this morning when I called upon my son and found that he did not get back home last night. I didn't know that he had been seized. So I came here.

According to my interpreter the discussion at this point lessened. An interesting sidelight was the repartee between the Deputy Chief and one of the six or seven additional

villagers who had come into the Village Hall and had been observing the discussions. One villager said "How busy the Council is... busy on this and busy on that... no stopping." And in a courteous manner the Deputy Chief replied, "Yes. No siesta."

Shortly thereafter the discussion turned to the typewritten report on the incident.

Deputy Chief: Final settlement of the problem is up to the Police Chief.

Police Chief after reading the statement turned to the five villagers: "You brothers must guarantee to straighten out the boys. You may have found it annoying to be here, but it was not unnecessary as the boys will see what harm they are doing to their parents. With your prestige as parents, you can rule them. I am dreadfully sorry, but I had to disturb you, Brothers."

Villager B, in a cynical tone: why not have the music at the guard house?

Father of the organizer: I will reprimand him.

And a long pause followed, but it was sharply broken by the outburst of Villager D: "Come here, boy, who invited you? Who?"

Someone had collected the five violators and brought them to the Village Hall. My interpreter estimated their ages from 18 to 26. They moved over to the desk of the Police Chief. The youngsters looked weary and frightened. The youngest wore white pyjamas and wooden clogs.

The Village Chief: "Why not come out and work--carrying earth to the foundation? Sixty-year olds are working. Why not follow their example? The present violation is harsh: your case is not that of thievery but of something else.

Villager B: "White pyjamas. White wooden clogs!"

Police Chief: "It is my judgment that your parents are honest people. I invited them here to see, younger brothers, how you behaved. And I invited you here to tell you what is good and proper to do. The Council has agreed to give each of you two days of labor punishment in order to mark a dark point on which you will have to put your concern. Respect your families' affairs. No more illegal gatherings. Agree?

Deputy Chief: Stand properly, will you, boys? Don't you understand what you are to do in the future? Play? Go out after girls? Or just drink, then go out after curfew hours without authorization?

Police Chief: If we had not been out there to get you, the Loi Binh Nhon police chief would have. And you know... curfew time. A musical performance must be authorized, for it might be used as a cover, then inside other activities. Understand?

All youngsters: Yes.

Police Chief: Recognize your faults. Maintain village security. The governmental policy is to guard against theft. You don't have to work all of the time. If you don't understand your duties, how can you ever understand others? Rehabilitate yourselves. Be good citizens of Khanh Hau, a village which has had, for a long time, the favorable concern of the superior.

Now, draft your "admissions of fault" and sign then. Turning then to the parents, the Police Chief went on to say, "As for you, brothers, you have seen that your sons misbehaved. It's your responsibility to educate them, in order to prevent any recurrence of such an incident."

The Police Chief, then quoted a Vietnamese proberb regarding the importance of the parents' role in the education of their children: "Without salt, the fish will rotten," and he continued with the observation that "Today, the fish are rotten, affecting even their parents."

Following this, the Police Chief left the center table and returned to his desk. He instructed the boys to include in their statements of guilt the form: "I..., seized on... by... for illegal gathering and drinking... I accept the punishment imposed on me by the Village Council."

Village B, still talking: When going anywhere, I tell my wife or get an authorization from the Council. It is a guarantee for myself!"

After the forms had been drafted and signed, the Police Chief closed the session with the statement: Don't you mind my taking this step. Nowadays you must behave properly, legally.

It's my duty, you know." And the five young men, with hands crossed on their chests, bowed slightly to the Police Chief and departed.[10]

x x x

If one recalls the discussion in Chapter III which quoted a plea of a Vietnamese leader in 1903 to reestablish the right of the village notables to use a whip as a means of punishing, the pattern of justice displayed in Khanh Hau in 1958 seemed a far step away. What impressed the writer about "village justice" was the apparent sympathy of the Police Chief for the defendants. In none of these cases was the Police Chief attempting to wield a "big stick"--let alone employ a whip. His closest step was a threat to send the defendant to the District Chief. In short, what these cases seemed to show was that "village justice" with its informal procedures and communal setting was being administered much more leniently than one might have anticipated, given the historical reference plus the pervasive, current concern over political security and its related aspects.[11]

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[10]Another case that occurred during the closing days of the field research should be mentioned for the interesting, and perhaps questionable, feature it pointed up about inter-village relationships. A young man from a neighboring village had come into Khanh Hau at night in order to visit his girl friend. For whatever the reason might have been, the girl's mother called for the police. The young man was fined 60$ for entering without permission and creating a disturbance. In addition, according to the Village Chief, he might also be punished by his home village for it would receive a report on the case.

[11]The writer wants to log, at least as a footnote, another case, somewhat difficult to follow, because of the humor which the Civil Status Councillor and Ke Hien displayed while describing the series of events. Apparently they appreciated both the twist of events as well as what might be called the "poetic justice" that was rendered, even though they disagreed with the final decision of the court. The incident occurred in 1958.

(next page)

•••Farmer "A" was away from home at the time that "B" came to borrow some rice. Being a neighbor of many years, "B" decided to take some rice and tell "A" when he returned, but as "B" was leaving, "A" returned and accused him of stealing. A fight ensued in which "B" was seriously injured. The Police Councillor took "B" to the hospital in the province and reported the fight to the District Chief.

Upon hearing the report, the District Chief decided in favor of "B". The Chief ordered "A" to pay the cost of the medical care. When "A" refused to comply, "B" went to the court (The Court of Peace With Extended Jurisdiction) in the neighboring province. Like the District Chief, the court ordered a payment of 1,000$ but still "A" refused.

After consulting a lawyer who demanded an advance payment of 600$ to handle the case, "B" decided to drop his claim.

But in the meantime "A" had gone to the newly established court in the home province. Its decision completely reversed the situation. It ordered "B" to pay "A" 1,000$ and imposed an additional penalty of one month in prison. It reasoned that "B" had been caught stealing rice. Why the payment? None of the village officials present could explain that "B," then, was forced to comply.

According to the Civil Status Councillor it was a past event that gave this case its humor--two years earlier "A" had suffered some humiliation at the expense of "B" who had slapped him after finding him attempting to "touch or feel" the young daughter of "B." Thus, "A" had been, looking for a chance for revenge.