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## SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SHIFTING AGRICUTURE

## OF THE

## WHITE MEO

Final Technical Report
May 15, 1968

by

George A. Binney


This research was conducted under Contract #N00014-66-C0143
with the Group Psychology Branch, Office of Naval Research

ARPA Order #811 NR 170-702



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July 15, 1968


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FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT
May 15, 1968

by

George A. Binney
(Research Contract No. N00014-16-C0143)

Before descending the White Meo marriage rules, I am going to discuss and describe briefly the historical background and the social organization of the White Meo or H'moong Deau (Hmoob Dawb), as they call themselves. The heartland of the H'moong tribes is the province of Kweichow in south China, but they are also found in the adjacent provinces of Hunan, Yunnan, Szechuan and the island of Hainan, which lies on parallel 20, directly across the gulf from Hanoi. It is speculated that the migrations of the H'moong into Laos, North Vietnam, Burma and northern Thailand have taken place over a span of fifty to one-hundred years. In the province of Chiengmai, I think a reasonable estimate might be forty to fifty years. Frequently the H'moong are distinguished by missionaries, ethnographers, and local authorities by their mode of dress. Thus in China alone we have records of Long Skirt Black Miao, Short Skirt Black Miao, Blue Miao, Red Miao, Magpie Miao, Cowrie-shell Miao, Ch'uan Miao and White Miao. In Thailand there is somewhat less confusion over names, primarily because of the relatively small number of H'moong resident there. The most recent estimate places them at somewhat less than 50,000. It should be emphasized; however, that this cannot be considered reliable due to inadequate census methods and the mobility of the H moong villages and villagers. There are usually three and sometimes four groups of H'moong cited as living in Thailand: the Blue Meo, the White Meo, the Gua M'ba Meo, and less frequently the Black Meo.

All of these people speak related dialects of the Miao-Yao language and are socially and culturally distinct from the Chinese (Ruey, Graham, etc.). I am concerned here with only those groups of H'moong who have migrated into North Thailand. On the linguistic level, I was able to distinguished only two distinct groups, which might be called tribes: the White Meo or H'moong Deau and the Blue Meo or the H'moong N'jua. These two dialects of the H'moong language are mutually intelligible, and the differences in idiom and vocabulary are slight. Other observable differences might include: the white dress skirt of the H'moong girls compared with the blue embroidered skirt of the H'moong N'jua, or the fact that H'moong Deau girls wear a cloth hatband, while the H'moong N'jua place their hair in a bun held in place by combs. There is also a slight difference in the construction of houses. The H'moong Deau house has two doors, one of which is considered the entrance for guests, while the other near the "pig fire" is more commonly used by household members in carrying out their chores The H'moong Deau are conscious of being different from the H'moong N'jua, but primarily they consider themselves as H'moong, to be decendants of the same ancestor, the legendary first man and woman (nkauj ntsuab nraug nas): and to have common beliefs

The mythology supporting this concept of Meoness is complex and certainly does not belong in this brief paper, but it is the basis from which the Meo division of the world is developed. In their division of peoples, there is above all a dichotomy between those people who live in the plains (mab daum), which includes the more specific term (mab suav), or all Chinese and those people that live in the hills and mountains. White Meo myths draw sharp divisions between these two groups with stories of conflict with unscrupulous and tricky plains folk. Prior to their migration into Southeast Asia the Meo hold that they thought of themselves and the Yao as the mountain people in an exclusive sense. In Laos, where the Meo are the predominate hill group, the division which separated Meo/mountain people from non-Meo/plains people was reinforced, with the Laotians (lostsuas) replacing the Chinese as the opposing plains people. In Thailand this concept has been modified because of the large groups of other hill people; Karen, Lahu, Lisu, Lawa, etc.. who do not fit into this scheme.

It is not unusual for a White Meo girl to marry and live in a village which is predominately Blue Meo. In all cases where I have recorded this type of marriage, the children were considered to be of their father's tribe, and, since residence is patrilocal, this identity with the father's tribe was reinforced by village contracts. The Blue Meo wife in two cases continued to wear the Blue Meo dress, but in all the other cases they chose to wear White Meo dress and arrange their hair in the White Meo fashion.

For the purposes of this paper I have used the designation "tribe" for the linguistic and cultural separateness between the White Meo and the Blue Meo, rather than the more common use of "tribe" to define more distinct ethnic and political divisions between the hill peoples of Thailand. With respect to the other two Meo groups commonly mentioned in Thailand, the Black Meo and the Armband Meo (Gua M'ba), they speak H'moong N'jua and H'moong Deau respectively. The Black Meo are, in effect, Blue Meo who may, depending on the area, wear slight variations in dress. The Armband Meo are found in the areas bordering Laos and are distinguished by a striped band around their upper arm.

The particular White Meo communities which are discussed in this paper are located in northern Thailand, more specifically in the Hong Dong and Chom Thong districts of Chiengmai Province. They live in hamlets and villages, located on mountain ridges, which in this area range from 7 to 35 households. Settlements of more than 40 households are rare in Chiengmai Province, though further south in Petchaboon and Pitsaneloke provinces, where the mountains meet the great central Thai plain, villages may number as many as 100 households. Patrilineally related households settle close together, forming localized patrilineages. The White Meo concept of a patrilineage is best expressed in the phrase: (Thooj nai-koo txiv, koom yaw) or having the same father, and grandfather and in this sense all members of the clan who can trace their descent to a common paternal grandfather belong to the same lineage. The unity of the lineage is evident in the household groupings or clusters within each village (Note:#1). In Ban Khae the four households clustered around Lao Ying Sae Ya belong to his lineage. While in Mae Nai, the houses surrounding Lao Sae Lu Sae Lee are those of his brother, his nephews and his paternal cousin. All of the houses in this cluster have common use of the smithy and barn behind Lao Sae Lu's house. This lineage unity is also expressed in ritual, the best example of which is the (cov ua hauv qhua) or that group of agnatic kin who bring rice, spirit money, and whisky to the grave of their common grandfather and grandmother each year on the third day following the White Meo new year. Another ritual specifically aligning lineage groups is the (seng kas) ceremony, which takes place on the day preceding new year. Only lineage members can pass under the rope of vine held over their heads as they pass around a young sapling. This act is followed by the words, "Now all the bad things have gone and the good things are here for the new year."

Descent is traced through agnates. In this instance, I am referring to membership in a kingroup and transmission of that membership exclusively through the male line. The transmission of property on death is also through agnatic kin. Women do not own or inherit (impartible) immoveable property, i. e. land, houses. They do not ideally own the small dowry of personal goods which they take with them to their husband's household after marriage. This dowry consists of a newly woven skirt, jacket, headband and the silver jewelry, including the neckbands which are worn in layers around the necks.

Surnames indicate membership in an exogamous clan, of which I have distinguished seven in the villages studied and visited. Reliable informants told me that there were a total of 12 White Meo clans in Thailand and Laos. Hamlets and villages are almost always composed of two or more intermarrying but dispersed clans. In Ban Khae there were 27 households, 15 with the surname Sae Wa, 12 with Sae Ya; in addition there were two Thai households and one Haw (Chinese), married to a White Meo girl from a neighboring village. Ban Surapon in Petchaboon consisted of 28 households, of which 25 were Sae Law, 1 Sae Lee, 1 Sae Chung and 1 Sae Hur. Mae Nai/JuJee had two clans: 11 households of the Sae Lee surname and 6 of the Sae Ya. The dispersal of these clans covers a wide area stretching from central Thailand to Kweichow, China, and I met several White Meo who had visited members of their clan in China during the past three years.

In both of the villages studied there were two or more triclans with, in one case, an almost equal division of clan households and, in the other, an imbalance of two to one. When queried about the division of clans within a village the Meo would usually answer that it was necessary to have two clans so that a man could find a wife. An example of this occurred in the recent segmentation of four Sae Wa households from Ban Khae. The four households moved from the village to a new location about ten hours walk from Ban Khae. The reasons for this move were: that they wanted to be near their fields (swidden), that the soil around Ban Khae was deteriorating because of overuse, and that there was no new land nearby with good soil. After eight months in the new village, they returned to Ban Khae. The reason given was that there were no eligible girls nearby of another clan. Marriage within the patronymic surname group is strictly forbidden. This prohibition is enforced by a fine of 4 tab (rupee-Burmese coinage) placed on each of the known offenders by the village headman or the council of elders. The extension of incest taboos to other females is mainly determined by the criterion of generation (the exception being WiSi.)

Residence after marriage is patrilocal, andit is the most common practice for the newly married couple to live in the household of the husband's father. Depending on the size of the household, this extended residence would continue for two or three years or until the first child was born. All residence of such a household used the single cooking fire beneath the drying loft, and meals were usually eaten together. Children under ten slept with their parents, but girls and boys of eleven and twelve were segregated in separate rooms. However nuclear families (cua tw cuab) are the predominant household unit with extended families next in frequency (Note: handout on distribution of nuclear and extended families.) A brief examination of household units in two White Meo villages indicated that in Mae Nai/Ju Jee villages there are 17 households, 7 of which are extended families. Two of these are stem families, and in both cases it is the eldest son with his wife and children living in the household of his father (genitor).

This breakdown of household units does not substantiate the White Meo ideal (concept) of ultimogenitary support and inheritance. It is the youngest son and (ntxawg) and his family, who are to remain in his father's house supporting his father and mother in their old age and finally sacrificing a cow at their burial. In turn the house, all swiddens under cultivation and any property not allocated by gift before death passes to the youngest son and his youngest son. It may be important to consider the developmental cycle and the generational span within each family unit. In one household (of the EBr stem type) the eldest son manages the household, and he and his wife are the only productive workers. The household head, his father, is heavily addicted to opium, and his mother is too old and weak to work in the swidden. His only brother (11 years) is too young to aid in household management and heavy work. In addition his younger brother must attend the Border Police school, which is more than two hours from the village. It is understood by the household members that, when the younger brother marries, the elder brother will set up an independent household. In the second household (of the ESo stem type) the youngest son chose to move to the village of his wife's family because his elder brother had been given the entire household savings to make his bridewealth payment. Thus when the youngest brother wanted to marry there was no silver for bridewealth payment. As a result the youngest brother decided to move into his wife's father's household where he could work off the bridewealth by laboring in his father-in-law's fields and otherwise supporting him.

The White Meo do practice polygamous marriage, although a number of previous writers, notably Father Savina, a French missionary in Laos, held that they did not. My material indicates that polygamy exists on a limited scale. There was one case of polygamy in Mae Nai/Ju Jee and three cases in Ban Khae. In all but one case the husband was of moderate wealth in terms of number of fields, horses, cows, goats, and supposed hidden wealth (silver). Whereas in Ban Khae all the polygamous husbands were over forty, in Mae Nai the husbands were under thirty years. Most of the villagers in both communities considered a second wife something extra and unneeded; however, three broad reasons were given as to why plural marriage might be desirable: 1) if after two years of marriage a wife has not produced a son, 2) if after one year of marriage a man has much land and no one to work it, and 3) if after one year of marriage a man decides that he needs two wives. In each case the second wife was considered a prestige symbol by the polygamous husband. A common phrase was, "A man with two wives and ten horses is very rich." Horses and cattle were the conspicuous indicators of wealth for the White Meo. In the Mae Nai case, the nephew of the spokesman (headman) took a second wife because his first wife had given him four girls in ten years of marriage and he saw little hope in getting a son. His second wife, the daughter of the village witchdoctor (shaman), has so far failed him also. When I completed my fieldwork in June 1967, he had six daughters. It was often remarked that he was potentially a very rich man with six daughters to bring bridewealth and two wives to work his swidden. In Ban Khae, out of the six wealthiest household heads, only the richest man in the village had two wives. His was the largest household I recorded, with sixteen children and a total of twenty members living in the household. Another man in Ban Khae had taken on his EBrWi when his brother had been killed. According to informants, levirate was quite common in White Meo villages, and it was considered correct for a widow to marry her dead husband's YBr. In such a case, no marriage ceremony is performed and no bridewealth is paid. However there is a prohibition against an EBr marrying the wife of his YBr. No satisfactory explanation was found for this prohibition.

There was a great deal of sexual freedom amongst the White Meo youth, except in the case of prohibited females. The villages would come alive in the late evening with visiting boys from other villages. The sound of the Meo (chaws) jew's harp, could be heard as young boys courted and played. One girl of fourteen years had four boys with whom she had sexual relations at the same time, and there were often arguments over which boy was in favor. The categories of woman with whom sexual relationships are prohibited included the (kwvtig) or girls from the same clan.

It may be helpful to point out that the White Meo clan can be contrasted to Murdock's sib. On marriage or more specifically when bridewealth has been fully paid, a wife becomes a member of her husband's clan (kwvtig). As a female member of the clan she has the same rights and obligations as her husband's unmarried sisters. The (lwm qaib) ceremony is a ritual expression of the incorporation of a wife into her husband's clan. A live chicken is held over her head at this ceremony, and her spirit is called and invited to come and live in her husband's home (household) and clan. Also if her husband dies and she remarries, bridewealth is paid to her first husband s lineage. Once a woman has become a member of her husband's clan, she can no longer participate in any ritual activity of her natal clan.

The WiYSi and WiESi are included in the category of prohibited women. Inquiry into this prohibition against sorate indicated that it was the women who made an effort to actualize this rule. Most White Meo men felt that it was a peripheral prohibition and did not recognize it as strictly prohibiting sexual relations with their wife's sister. Women indicated; however, that the prohibition was as strong as those against sexual relations within the clan (between members of the clan.)Other prohibited women include FaSi, MoSi, SiDa, MoBrWi, WiBrDa, BrWi. In most of these categories it was the generation difference to which prohibition was attributed. In the case of WiBrWi marriage and even sexual relations were prohibited, even if WiBr were dead. I think it would be possible to say that pronibitions outside the nuclear family do not coincide with the nearness of actual biological kin.

The preferred marriage partner is the patrilateral cross-cousin and to a lesser degree MoBrDa (Note: chart on terminology.) The reason for this preference for patrilateral cross-cousins is not easy for the younger men to describe, and they did not attach much importance to marrying their real muam npawg or FaSiDa. Rather it meant that real and classificatory muam npawg were their recognized sexual partners. A boy felt that he could exhibit a sexual attidude toward his muam npawg, and he felt confidence in doing so, because he knew that his attitude was correct. Both FaSiDa and MoBrDa were addressed and referred to as "muam npawg" by their male cross-cousins. As with much of the White Meo kin terminology this is a compound term combining the term for sister (muam and npawg), which is a complex term which can be used generically for anyone from another clan. It is also used as a term of address for someone of the same age whose classificatory relationship is unknown to the speaker. Often White Meo passing on the trail would address each other as npawg. In addition to its use as amodifier for cross-cousins, npawg was used as an elementary term for male cross-cousins when a man is speaking. In this context muam npawg then might be freely translated as "sister of another clan" or "sister of FaSiSo and MoBrSo" depending on the emphasis desired. The relationship between a man and his npawg was characterized by comradeship and joking. And in many cases where these two relatives were of the same approximate age, a special relationship developed, which can be described as one of constant companionship and mutual trust. They would lend money to each other, exchange confidences, go hunting and play games, and when asked why they were such close companions, they would answer, "We are npawg."

" It is true that there was an ambiguity in the use of this term. Npawg, is employed loosely to describe a comrade or very good friend from another clan in contrast to kwvluag, which is used for a good friend from one's own clan. Kwvluag can be freely translated as "little brother."

When speaking to me about (muam npawg) marriage White Meo boys would often say," Why should we marry our muam npawg, when we can marry anyone from our mother's clan, our mother's mother's clan and our father's mother's clan? Thus the freedom of choice was expressed in terms of marrying specific non-prohibited groups of females, which in fact were sisters of classificatory npawg, because there is a general prohibition against marrying women of another generation. Any woman in this range of relatives who was of different clan but the same generation was a preferred marriage partner.

White Meo girls when questioned about suitable marriage partners would usually deny any interest and if pressed further would claim that they had no choice in the matter of whom her husband might be. The term used by a woman for her male cross-cousin is yaum dab. Yaum in its three tonal variations is used for MoBr, WiBr, SiHu, HuSiHu, FaFaFa, FaFa and MoFa in addition to its cross-cousin usage. In all of these terms it is compounded except as it is employed for FaFa or the paternal grandfather. As a verb, pronounced with the same tone, low middle, as the cross-cousin usage it means: to urge, to persuade, to try to get others to agree. The term Yawm txiv MoFa is frequently used by a man when referring to his father-in-law and in this usage it is teknonymous, for in doing so he uses the term used by his children for their maternal grandfather. It may be significant that, in all of these usages except for paternal grandfather, the term is used in combination with others to indicate certain relationships through mother, sister and wife. Dab is the White Meo word for spirits and is used extensively with modifiers to specify the various spirts of the White Meo spirit world.

Older informants when questioned on the subject of marriage rules would explain that a man could marry anyone who pleased him as long as she was not in a prohibited category, but that it is better to marry one's real FaSiDa or MoBrDa for then property would be kept "within the family" and, in the words of one informant, "you would be taking back your own." The headman (tus hus zos) and founder of Mae Nai/Ju Jee was determined that his only son Lao Tong should marry his FaSiDa. He had made a marriage contract to this effect with his SiHu, who lived in another village. His reasons were economic.

The White Meo often establish a marriage bond with the father of a correct marriage partner, whereby their child or unborn child is ritually promised to the son or daughter of the other party in marriage. A heavily embroidered cloth or a payment of 4 rupees is given to the wife-givers by the wife-takers when a child of the correct sex is born. This payment symbolizes the contract. A girl promised in such a marriage is usually compelled to marry; however, if the boy wants to break the "engagement" he can do so by paying a small fine to her father. If such a girl has a lover who wants to marry her, the lover must pay a double bridewealth--one part going to her father and the other to her bethrothed marriage partner.

Bridewealth must be fully paid before a wife is considered a member of her husband's clan. As soon as the bridewealth payment is completed, she will begin to address and refer to her natal family as affines, when speaking of them or to them as a group, using the term neejtsa as her husband does. Neejtsa means all affines or in the above context a man's relatives by marriage and/or a woman's consanguineal relatives after she has married. The term is normally used in the phrase pe i cho neejtsa, which may be translated "our affines." Her husband's clan then becomes kwvtig, and she uses this term in describing and referring to her husband's clan.

Often the White Meo use the phrase kwvtij thaj kub when speaking of the distant members of their clan. Kub is a word which is associated with opium smoking and opium pipes. When I inquired about the use of this word for distant clansment, I was told that customarily one always offers a pipe to a kwvtig visiting his house. Since the White Meo also use the term (kwvtig) for members of their own patrilineage, I have used the word kwvtig in reference to lineage groups and kwvtig kub when referring to the dispersed clan.

Bridewealth commonly consists of a payment of 8 hang or crude bars of silver. If a woman has been married before and she has no children, 100 rupees is deducted from the price. If she has more than three children, the bridewealth is halved to four hang. Also given to the wife-givers by the wife-takers are one large pig, two chickens and ten bottles of Meo whisky, which is the basis for the wedding feast. Non-payment or partial payment of the bridewealth may result in matrilocal residence, although the White Meo insist that until the bridewealth is fully paid the marriage is not formally constituted and that such a couple are living together out of marriage, which means that any offspring do not belong to the husband's clan. Often the bride's father and mother are taken into the groom's new household and supported by the groom and their daughter. Such support usually is reckoned as partial payment of bridewealth. However this must be negociated at the wedding and the bridewealth adjusted accordingly, otherwise a man's wife and children could not become members of his clan. In two instances where I have observed this type of household group, the bride's parents had no sons resident in their village and in one instance the bride's parents were very old and unable to sustain themselves. When I inquired into who was to sacrifice a cow on their death, I was told that their respective sons would return from Nan district to do this.

The lengthy negociation which precede a marriage are always handled by the mej koob-meng kong or representatives of the two groups:wife-takers and wife-givers. There are a number of ways in which the marriage negociations may be influenced. Initially a man's father sends his representative to the girl's father after or possibly before any understanding has been reached by the couple. In both cases the girl's father will demand an exaggerated bridewealth; however, if he thinks this is a good marriage or is particularly interested in marrying off his daughter, this price is quickly brought down through negociation. If the price is too high the girl may go and live in her lover's household or she may be kidnapped willingly or unwillingly by her suitor if he comes from another village. All these acts places pressure on the girl's father to negociate. If a girl is kidnapped, the suitor's father is required to send a representative to the girl's father within three days. All the silver and jewelry that the girl was wearing must be returned by this representative. If the girl's father is not notified within three days, he can ask the headman to fine the abductor 33 rupees, one bottle of whisky and two chickens, or if marriage is agreed to, a payment of 40 rupees may be added to the bridewealth. The abduction of a girl and her presence in her suitor's household are considered to be favorable negociating points for the wife-takers group. If a girl becomes pregnant, this also adds to the wife-takers bargaining position.

The negociation between the (mej koob) of the wife-takers and the wife-givers continues until they reach a reasonable compromise position at that point the bridewealth negociation stop and the wedding plans are discussed. At the wedding ceremony itself the final compromise is made by the wife-takers.

Although the bride's dowry is usually small, consisting of her clothes, personal effects and some jewelry, it may play an important part in the negociation, especially if the wife-takers become reluctant at the last moment. The bride may receive extra silver neckloops and jewelry in order to maker her more attractive to the wife-takers.

The presentation of the bridewealth is made by the mej koob representative of the wife-takers, who should not be from the groom's lineage to the representative of the wife-givers. The (txiv hlob) FaEBr and the (txiv ntxawm) FaYBr of the groom are called upon to assist the groom and his father in the payment of bridewealth; however, repayment of such a debt to FaEBr and FaYBr must be cleared and such accounts are reckoned from generation to generation. EBrs and YBrs are first and second respectively in the line of inheritance if a man has no sons. They also have authority over their brother's children and are expected to exert discipline when the father is not present. If a boy s father dies when the boy is still under twenty and he has no EBr, his FaEBr, becomes a kind of trustee over his father's property and the boy must move into his FaEBr's household. If a boy has no (txiv hlob) his FaYBr will assume this position.

Payment of the bridewealth to the bride's father and the wedding feast are only a part of the complex of relationships between wife-takers and wife-givers. The groom's family must give 4 rupees (tab) to the WiEBr and WiESi, 3 rupees to the WiYBr, 12 rupees to the WiFaFa and WiFaMo, 5 rupees to all of the WiFaSis and WiFaBrs. In addition to these payments to these particular members of the wife-givers group, the wife-takers are expected to give a second or post-marital feast for the wife-givers three years after the wedding. The minimal requirements for this feast are also prescribed: one large pig, 4 bottles of Meo whisky or rice wine, and two chickens. It is the obligation of the wife-takers to present at least the above quantity of food for the wife-givers. If the wife-takers group for some reason cannot afford such a feast, they must make this known well in advance, and make-up for this slight by frequent invitations to the wife-givers to come and have rice whisky at their house or the house of a clan member. The wife-givers do not reciprocate such invitations no matter how many times they are hosted during the first three years of marriage. However, after waiting the appropriate period of three years, they may and usually do invite the wife-takers to their house

When the wife-takers and wife-givers are from different villages, it is expected that a member of the wife-takers group visiting the wife-giver's village will first seek out an age-mate from the wife-givers family and grasp his upper arm while addressing him with the appropriate term. Then he must say, "Come drink with me." After this formality, the visitor may carry out the purpose of his visit. When passing on the trail or in the forest the wife-takers must initiate the coos gaws, which is the traditional Meo formal greeting. It consists of the opening and closing of the cupped hands accompanied by a slight bow. It is a gesture of respect and prestation and is also used when an honored guest enters a household. The wife-givers may or may not return the coos gaws of the wife-takers.

I can best describe the wife-giver/wife-taker relationship by the White Meo term cuam muas, which means to not meet properly. There is an underlying attitude of respect that the wife-takers must exhibit to the wife-givers. I would say that this is formalized behavior rather than sentiment. Two wife-givers in Ban Khae complained to me when we were discussing these matters, that they are not receiving enough respect from their daughter's husband's group. They said the younger Meo had forgotten good behavior and were becoming more like Thais every day. In both of these cases the wife-takers were not real or classificatory cross-cousins.

To demonstrate his position of humility and respect at the wedding feast, the groom must coos gaws and kneel before his wife's group on three separate occasions. This requires the separation of the two groups, which is maintained through most of the ceremony. This coos gaws formality is repeated by the wife-takers group three years later at the post-marital feast given by the wife-takers

A husband is expected to always show respect to his wife's family, and the relationship should be formal and polite.

The behavior of respect and formality toward WiFa and WiMo conforms with the relationship between a man and his (phauj) FaSi and (yawm laus) FaSiHu. FaSi has the authority to teach and punish her (nus cur) BrSo as do FaBrs, but the relationship extends far beyond that. Prohibitions, fear, and magical powers are associated with FaSi. BrSo cannot live with his FaSi even though his father dies. Although he can borrow from his FaSi, she is in no way obligated to give him aid. He cannot ask her for aid in the payment of bridewealth. FaSi has magical powers over her BrSo and he fears her anger and curse for this reason. She has the power to kill him, make him ill or childless with a simple curse. If FaSi asks her BrSo to work in her fields, it is likely that he will obey her more quickly than if his father or FaBr were to ask him. If marriage takes place between FaSiDa (muam npawg), the newly married pair are prohibited from living even temporarily in his FaSi's house. In this case part of the bridewealth may be borrowed from FaSi. Repayment can be made at any time, and I have recorded two cases where it was never paid. However, if BrSo marries a girl other than FaSiDa, he must pay his FaSi 12 rupees, and there is no reciprocal act or return of this payment. If FaSi dies before marrying, BrSo inherits all her personal effects and whatever property she may have. Though such property may be limited to clothing and jewelry, it nevertheless symbolizes the special relationship between FaSi and BrSo. When BrSo's father dies he must notify his FaSi before anyone else and if she lives in another village he must pay for her trip and maintain her while she is in his village. FaSi can demand that an extra cow be sacrificed at her brother's burial and BrSo must comply with her wishes.

With all of the foregoing and more formally characterizing the relationship between FaSi and BrSo, it is surprising that there is no effort, on the part of BrSo to avoid his FaSi. However, the Meo do say that they avoid (yawm laug) FaSiHu. They told me that they fear FaSiHu because he may say bad things about them to FaSi. My observations indicate that in many cases FaSi lives in another village; therefore, avoidance is not evident.

I have recorded the story of a BrSo-FaSiDa marriage which may demonstrate the relationship between FaSi and BrSo in a more concrete manner. Here is the outline of this story. About seven years ago in the village of Maesa, a BroSo decided to marry his FaSiDa. Everyone in his family was very pleased with this choice. When it came time for negociation, FaSi insisted that BrSo pay her 8 hang for her daughter. She said that since her husband was dead, the loss of her daughter would mean that she must live alone. This was considered an excessive amount for such a marriage, but FaSi would not compromise. Finally the lineage decided to choose two of its senior members to arbitrate the matter. The decision of the arbitors was that 5 hang was a fair price. BrSo and FaSiDa were married but at the wedding FaSi swore at them saying that they would have no children. After the wedding all contact was cut between FaSi and BrSo and his wife. Six years passed and they had no children, so late in 1966, BrSo came to FaSi and asked her forgiveness, paying her the additional 3 hang of silver.

Behavior toward MoBr (dab laus) is quite the reverse of the FaSi relationship. Although MoBr can teach and punish his SiSo (mee tus) he rarely does so. However, if SiSo feels that his mother has been too harsh with him, he often seeks sympathy from his MoBr and complains. In such a case MoBr is obligated to reprimand his sister and, from my observations, MoBr usually takes pride in doing this. If SiSo has no father, FaBr, or FaSi (in the case of FaSiDa marriage) and he needs money to pay bridewealth or some other debt, he may ask his MoBr, who must help him. Should SiSo marry someone other than MoBrDa, there is no payment which must be made to MoBr. However, if SiSo does marry MoBrDa, a lower brideprice is expected and, from this negociated price,

two, hang are returned to SiSo by his MoBr as a gesture of approbation. SiSo and his wife cannot under any circumstances live in MoBr's house even if MoBr is dead.

MoBrWi (niam dab laug) is a kind of mother to her HuSiSo. She does not teach or discipline him, but she does give him food and gifts from time to time. In summation, the tone of this relationship is more informal and friendly than that which a boy has with any of his father's group. A young boy who has not yet accepted his position of clanship usually prefers to visit his mother's group.

The genealogical data from Mae Nai/Ju Jee indicates only one case of real patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, and this was between Lao Sae Sae Lee and Na Chi Sae Ya. There is an interesting background to this marriage which may demonstrate the relationships and obligations as they develope on the ground. Lao Neng Sae Lee, the EBr of Lao Sae had taken his FaSiDa as his lover. About a year later Na Chi became pregnant. Her father Lao Ju went to Lao Neng and told him that he must either pay the fine of 33 rupees or marry his daughter. Lao Neng told his FaSiHu that his daughter had been with many men and that he was sure that he was not the father of the child, besides only two months before he had married Na Ya Sae Wa. Lao Ju told his WiBrSo that, if he did not marry his FaSiDa, that he would take him to the Thai authorities who would force him to do so under Thai law. To make the matter more complicated Lao Neng was at that time having sexual relations with Na Chung, the YSi of Na Chi. Lao Neng then spoke to his YBr, Lao Sae and asked him to marry Na Chi. Lao Sae at the time was in love with a girl from Ju Jee hamlet. Lao Neng then spoke to his FaYBr and, Lao Tua. These men than persuaded Lao Sae to marry Na Chi, but everyone felt that they should wait until the baby was born and in addition Lao Sae was only 14 years old. Lao Ju was given 1 joy of opium to improve his wounded pride. Na Ya Sae Wa, wife of Lao Neng then threatened to leave him because of his relations with Na Chung. A month after this a Meo from another village visited Mae Nai and asked Lao Ju for Na Chung. He paid 8 hang and they were immediately married. Soon after Lao Sae and Na Chi were married. Lao Neng and Lao Sae now live in their mother's house with their respective wives.

The punishment imposed for adultry is prescribed by White Meo custom as a fine of 33 rupees for the first offense. This must be paid by the lover to the husband of the woman envolved. In addition two rupees, one chicken and one bottle of whisky must be paid by the lover to the headman of the village; while four rupees, one chicken and one bottle of whisky must be paid to the informer. The guilty wife is usually beaten by her husband. Continued adultry by a woman results in more severe punishment and the public exhibit of the offenders. There is no fine or punishment for a man who commits adultry with an unmarried woman.

In Mai Nai there are two cases of real matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. Both of these marriages envolve women from the village who have married and settled in another village. The number of real patrilateral cross-cousin marriages in Ban Khae were three. Two of these marriages took place within the last five years. There were four marriages with real matrilateral cross-cousins.

Classificatory terminology followed generational criterion when it was known by the speaker. Otherwise relative age was used in selecting a correct classificatory term in address. In a man's mother's clan, his MoFaSiDaDa,MoFaSiSiDa, MoFaBrDaDa and MoFaBrSoDa are classified (called) muam npawg. In his MoMo's clan and his FaMo's clan the same extension of classificatory muam npawg existed. Thus a wide range of preferred marriage partners were available. When I discussed this range of classificatory muam npawg in terms of preferences between women from Mo's clan, MoMo's clan and FaMo's clan, the informants indicated that this was not considered, but that since Mo's clan was the closest group, there might be a preference in that direction.

When questioning the villagers about genealogies, I found that most men could remember the names and classificatory terms for their own clan members to a depth of five generations. That is, they could recall the names of their FaFaFa, FaFa and FaMo, but it was rare that they could recall their FaFaMo. All collaterals of FaFa were called by the same terms as FaFa and FaMo. Two informants insisted that phauj pog should be used for FaFaSis, but this was not common. Phauj pog might be translated great aunt. In the descending generation they almost always were limited to their children and grandchildren, but the term for great grandchild was often used by very old men and women even when they didn't remember the name of the child (xeeb mujmum).

When questioned about the genealogies of their Mo's clan, MoMo's and FaMo's clans it was unusual to find anyone who remembered the name of MoMoFa or FaMoFa. It was obviously difficult for them to establish who their classificatory muam npawg were. Therefore it appeared as if any woman of the same generation as Ego, who was from Mo's, MoMo's or FaMo's clan was classified as muam npawg.

The White Meo often use classificatory terms in addressing anyone to whom they want to show respect or to indicate that the person spoken to is a part of a particular classificatory group. Terms were employed, in particular, when addressing someone older than yourself.

In using terminology, when addressing someone, whose generation and exact kin relationship is unknown, the White Meo seem to follow two rules based on a person's relative age. Anyone from the same clan whose relationship is unknown is addressed with the terms applied to members of one's own lineage depending on that person's relative age, sex and the sex of the speaker. A man slightly older than Fa would be addressed as "txiv hlob " the term for FaEBr or a man younger than Fa (txiv ntrawm) FaYBr.

Anyone from a different clan whose relationship is unknown is addressed with the terminology used for members of MoFa's clan depending on that person's relative age sex and the sex of the speaker. A man slightly older than Fa would be addressed as (dab laus) MoEBr. A man the same age as oneself would be npawg and his sister maum npawg. It should be noted that these applications of kin terminology are used only when addressing a person under particular circumstances. On most occasions a person's given name was used when it was known.

My analysis of genealogies in Ban Khae suggests a preference for bilateral cross-cousin marriage. Out of a total of 15 marriages, 11 were classificatory bilateral cross-cousins. This is a random sample of marriages in the village and does not represent total village situation.

Although, from what has already been said, there is evidence of a formalized inequality between wife-takers and wife-givers I could find no exclusive asymmetrical basis whereby there is a relationship of perpetual alliance i.e. where A's give wives to the B's but the B's don't give wives to the A's. Nor do the White Meo have term which clearly indicates the status relationship between wife-takers and wife-givers. The only term used to describe the relationship (cuam muas) is a negative expression implying what such a relationship should not evolve. Nor do the marriages noted in the villages of Ban Khae and Mae Nai/Ju Jee follow the pattern for such prescribed asymmetrical marriage systems as the Kachin (mayu-dama), the Lakher (patong-ngazua), the Batak (hulahula-anak boru) or the Gilyak (axmalk-imgi). I therefore would not conclude that the White Meo have a prescriptive matrilateral or patrilateral marriage system.

If matrilateral cross-cousin marriage were the dominant marriage type, the wife-givers would be in a permant position of supplying women to the wife-takers, and wife-takers would then be in a permanent position of feasting and showing deference to the wife-givers. Thus an inequality would exist in respect to marraige. This is not the case with the White Meo where I have observed numerous examples of marriages going both ways within one family.

Although there is a conscious preference for marriage with FaSiDa, the facts seem to indicate that it is just that and nothing more.

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## Financial Statement

Total funds expended:

| | |
|---|---|
| Maintenance | $20,726.00 |
| Equipment | 2,070.22 |
| Field Assistant | 604.00 |
| Travel | 4,785.97 |
| Miscellaneous | 3,060.40 |
| | $31,245.59 |

July 15, 1968

George A. Binney
Project Scientist

Appendix (1)

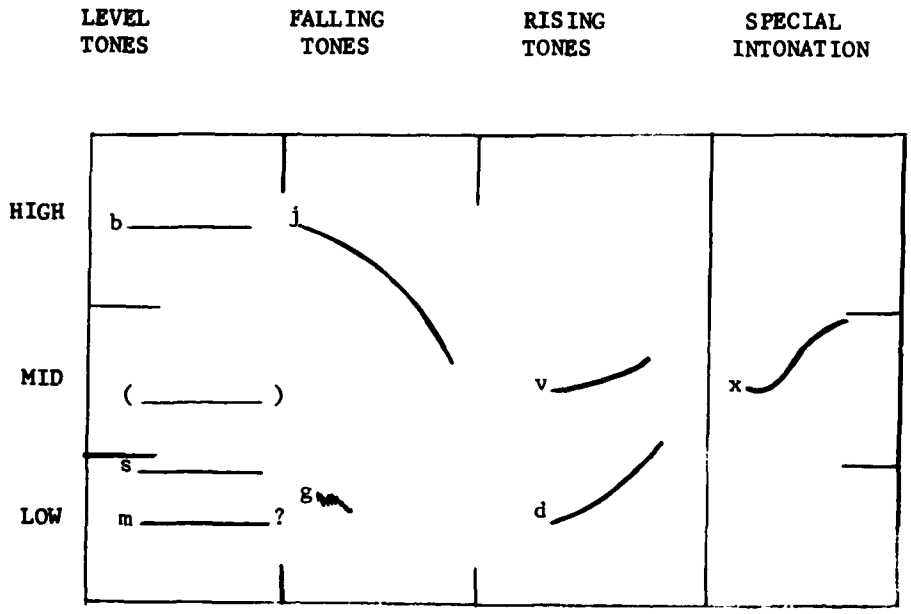
## Appendix to Final Report:

## FAMILY & KINSHIP

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| aunt | father's sister (older or younger) | - phauj |
| | mother's older sister | - niam tais hlob |
| | mother's younger sister | - niam tais yau |
| | mother's brother's wives (o.or y.) | - niam dab laug |
| | father's older brother's wife | - niam hlob |
| | father's younger brother's wife | - niam ntxawm |
| | great aunt(paternal grandfather's sisters) | - phauj pog |
| brother | older b. as called by brothers | - tijlaug |
| | younger b. as called by brothers | - kwv |
| | as called by sisters | - nus |
| brother-in-law | husband's older brother | - txiv laus |
| | husband's younger brother | - called by given name |
| | wife's older brother | - yawm dab hlob |
| | wife's younger brother | - yawm dab yau |
| | sister's husband | - yawm yij |
| | wife's older sister's husband | - txiv laus |
| | wife's younger sister's husband | - txiv hlaus |
| children | | - menyaum |
| daughter | | - ntxhais, mentxhais |
| daughter-in-law | | - nyab |
| father | | - txiv |
| father-in-law | | - txiv |
| great grandparents (on father's side) | | - yawg koob, pog koob |
| great great grandparents (on father's side) | | - yawg suab, pog suab |
| great grandparents (on mother's side) | | - yawm txiv yawg, niam tais pog |
| grandfather (paternal) | | - yawg |
| (maternal) | | - yawm txiv |
| grandmother (paternal) | | - pog |
| (maternal) | | - niam tais |
| great grandchild | | - xeeb mujmum |
| grandchild | | - xeeb txwv |
| husband | | - tus txiv |
| mother | | - niam |
| mother-in-law | | - niam |
| nephew | son of older brother | - tij tub |
| | son of younger brother | - kwv tub |
| parents (or parents-in-law) | | - niam txiv |
| sister (older or younger) | as called by brother | - muam |
| | as called by sister | - vivncaus |

Appendix (2)

CHART OF WHITE MEO TONAL PATTERN




TONE CHART
EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Since no syllable ends in a final consonant, the tone (except the mid tone) is indicated by an English consonant letter written at the end of each syllable and corresponding to the chart above. Where no special tone mark is written the word has a mid tone. Relative pitch, length and contour or the tones is indicated on the chart.

2. The tone chart is drawn to indicate the tones as heard in isolation. That is, as heard on separate unconnected syllables. In the normal flow of speech tones tend to vary somewhat in pitch and quality depending both upon patterns of stress and upon the influence of other contiguous tones. This should be carefully noted.

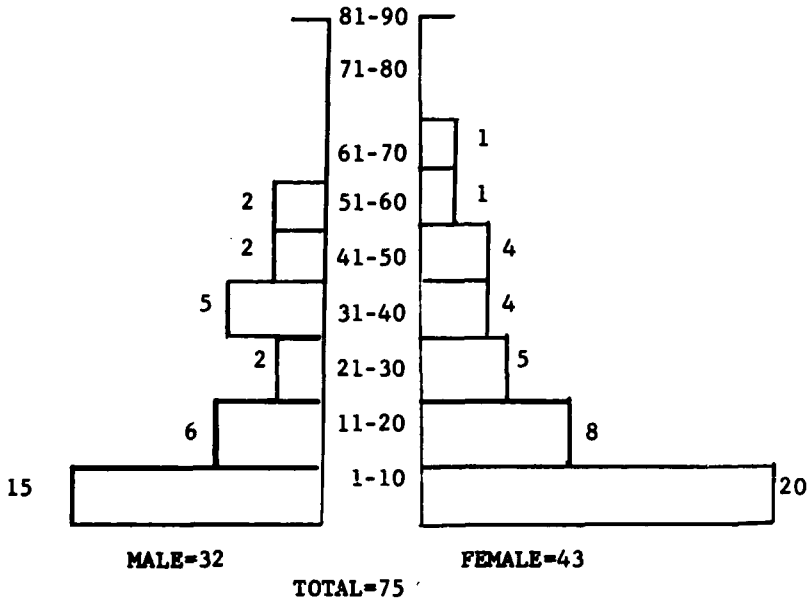
3. Note that tone --m ends in a glottal stop and is said with some constriction of the throat. Tone --g is characterized by considerable breathiness.

Appendix (3)

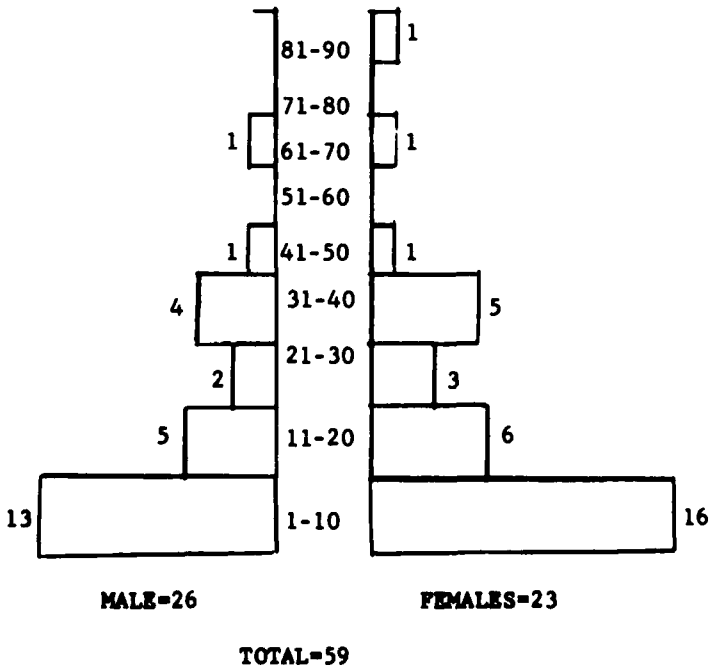
## NUCLEAR/EXTENDED HOUSEHOLDS

| | Mae Nai-Ju Jee | Ban Khae | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nuclear | 7 | 12 | 19 |
| Extended (ESo&Wi&Ch) | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Extended (YSo&Wi&Ch) | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Extended (Collaterals) Brs. | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Extended (Single aged parent) Mos. | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| | 17 | 27 | |

POPULATION PYRAMID, MAE NAI VILLAGE, 1966




POPULATION PYRAMID, JU JEE VILLAGE, 1966



Appendix (5) I SIBLING & COUSIN TERMINOLOGY

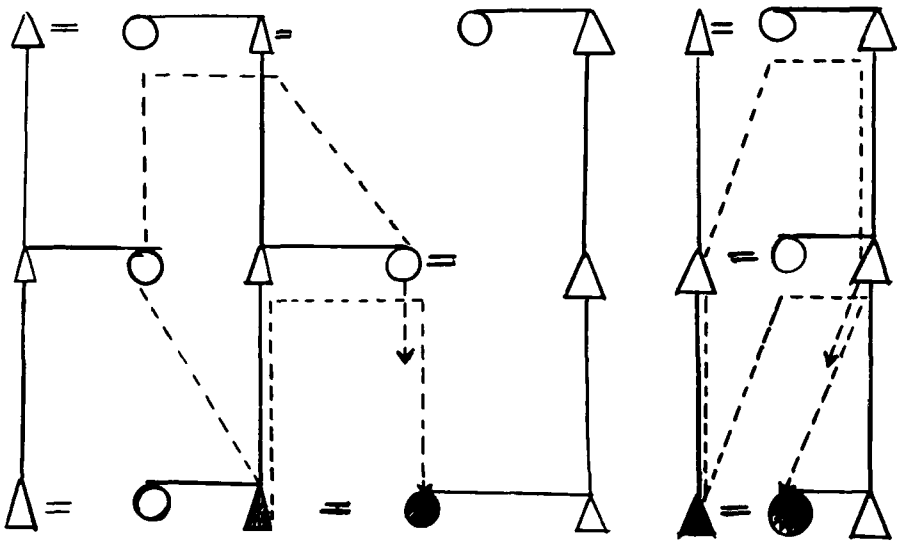
| | | Sibling | Matri CC | Matri PC | Patri CC | Patri PC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ms | EBr | tig laus | | tig laus npawg | | tig laus |
| | | | npawg(bur) | | npawg(bur) | |
| | YBr | kwv(cur) | | kwv " | | kwv |
| | ESi | muan laus | | muam laus " | | muam laus |
| | | | muam npawg | | muam npawg | |
| | YSi | muam yaos (kwv) | | muam yaos " | | muam yaos |
| ws | EBr | nus laus | | nus laus npawg | | nus laus |
| | | | yaum dab | | yaum dab | |
| | YBr | nus yaos (kwv) | (yur da) | nus yaos " | | nus yaos |
| | ESi | niam laus (vivncaus) | | niam laus " | | niam laus |
| | | | vin npaws | | vin npaws | |
| | YSi | niam hluas (vivncaus) | | niam hluas" | | niam hluas |

AFFINES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| WiBr | yawm dabhlob | HuEBr | laus (tig) |
| WiYBr | yawm dab | HuYBr | kwv (yaos) given name |
| WiESi | niam lauss | HuESi | muam laus " |
| WiYSi | niam hluas | HuYSi | muam yao " |
| WiFa | yaum | HuFa | yaum (tus txiv) |
| WiMo | niam tais | HuMo | pog |
| Wi | pojniam | Hu | yaus |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SoWiFa | yaug cuas | EBrWi(ms) | niam tij |
| DaHuFa | " | EBrWi(ws) | tis nyab |
| SoWiMo | poj cuag | YBrWi(ms) | niam ncaus |
| DaHuMo | " | YBrWi(ws) | tis nyab |

Appendix (6)



FZD or
MMBDD

MBD or
FMBSD

Figure 1. Two routes for reckoning matri-and patri-cross-cousins in prescriptive models.

The above diagram proposes to demonstrate that a MBD can also be traced through a scenic route as FMBSD and is therefore also a bilateral cousin (Figure #1).

A KHMU
NA CHIA
LAO SOW
NA CHI
NA TONG
NA TUA
LAO SA
LAO ENG
NA CHE
UNKNOWN
NA TE
LAO MAO SAE VA
NA CHI
NA SI
LAO DIA SAE VA
NA WIAN
NA JU
LAO TONG
LAO SENG
LAO JU
LAO JUA
LAO SAE
NA JUA (SAE VA)
NA SAA (SAE VA)
NA JU (SAE TOW)
NA CHO (SAE VA)
NA MI (SAE VA)
LAO JONG
LAO KAN
NA MI
LAO DIA
LAO DOK (NA VA)
LAO SAE
LAO JUA
LAO TUA
LAO JU
LAO CHU
LAO SAE
NA CHIS

Security Classification

## DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R&D

*(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 ORIGINATING ACTIVITY *(Corporate author)*<br>Wildlife Management Institute | 2a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION<br>None<br>2b GROUP |

3 REPORT TITLE

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT-SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SHIFTING AGRICULTURE-THE WHITE MEO

4 DESCRIPTIVE NOTES *(Type of report and inclusive dates)*

Final Report (32 months) - November 1965-July 1968

5 AUTHOR(S) *(Last name, first name, initial)*

Binney, George A.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 REPORT DATE<br>July 15, 1968 | 7a TOTAL NO OF PAGES<br>21 | 7b NO OF REFS<br>3 |
| 8a CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.<br>Research Contract No. N00014-66-C0143<br>b. PROJECT NO<br>c<br>d | 9a ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)<br>ARPA Order #811 NR 170-172<br>9b OTHER REPORT NO(S) *(Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)* | |

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|---|---|
| 11 SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | 12 SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY |

13 ABSTRACT

This is the Final Technical Report for the project study of White Meo communities in northern Thailand. The particular communities which are discussed in this paper are located in the Hong Dong and Chom Thong districts of Chiengmai Province. In this region, settlements of more than 40 households are rare, and the hamlets, located on mountain ridges, average 7 to 35 households. The report deals with marriage and courtship customs, the complex social structure of clans, households, and family units, and the interrelationships of these groups within the community. Patrilinenally related households settle close together, forming localized patrilineages. Descent is traced through agnates, and transmission of property on death also is through agnatic kin. Residence after marriage is patrilocal and it is the common practice for the newly married couple to live in the household of the husband's father. The White Meo often establish a marriage bond with the father of a suitable marriage partner, whereby the child, born or unborn, is promised to the son or daughter of the other party in marriage. A girl promised under such a contract usually is required to marry, although a boy can void the contract on payment of a small fine. Bridewealth must be paid before a wife can be considered a member of her husband's clan. Lengthy negotiations, handled by representatives of the wife-takers and wife-givers, precede the marriage. Examples and case histories are cited in the report.

DD FORM 1 JAN 64 1473

Security Classification

Security Classification

| 14. KEY WORDS | LINK A ROLE | LINK A WT | LINK B ROLE | LINK B WT | LINK C ROLE | LINK C WT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |

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