

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES ON THE AKHAS OF BURMA

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SICKNESS AND TREATMENT

PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE

Akhas believe that if a person is 'spiritually potent' (gui lah sa la hui-eu), he will be healthy. A person who is 'thin-souled' (gui lah sa la ba-eu) will be sickly, and often attacked by spirits, which seems to be the main cause of disease.

For an individual to keep from getting sick, there are certain amulets that Akhas wear, but they are not too common. Those that children wear are called 'la paw-i' and adults wear 'she-eh law dah'. Both of these terms are from the Shan Language, since they have been borrowed from the Shans, and for the most part they buy them from the Shans.

Sometimes Akhas make little bags (as pictured in Young's book of the Akha 'male', pg. XV). They usually put in some powdered horn that comes from a single horn that some female barking deer have right in the middle of their head (ci ha ci ma u coe). This is very 'potent', although K-28 and 29 felt that the man in the picture (from Thailand) was probably a bad man to be wearing that, since he robbed people they could not shoot him or injure him with a machete.

The solid tusk from a wild boar (za te jui g'oe), and the solid tusk from a tiger (k'a la jui g'oe) are also highly prized as charms against sickness and attack. The normal tusks are hollow. That is why the solid kind is felt to have special charms. Akhas say you can only shoot a wild boar with a solid tusk like this on its birthday.

When someone has been travelling, especially in villages where there has been sickness, when he gets near his own village he will perform a 'follow-me-not' ceremony (meh gu gu-eu). This is to keep the illness from following him into his own village.

This is what he does. At the junction of the path that is the final one before entering the village, he will make three piles of the following: 'magic vine' (meh), thatch, and a stick (some don't include a stick). These are on the part of the junction, which leads to the village, and are put down to 'block' the path for the spirit of sickness to go into the village. When they have made the three piles they spit on each one, and tell the spirits to go around their village to some other place. 'Don't follow me into the village. Go to someone else's country. Etc.'

When a person has died a 'terrible death' (sha) the spirit of that person will often try to follow travellers back into the village. They can hear it calling, 'Eu, eu', as it follows them. So they will again perform the 'follow-me-not' ceremony, much as above, except that this time they will not spit on the three piles. 'We have been taught from childhood not to spit when we perform the 'forget-me-not' ceremony for a 'terrible death' spirit.

There are other ways of performing the 'follow-me-not' ceremony. One is to put down leaves from three different types of trees and pile them together-without thatch or sticks. Also, none of them need to be the magic vine (meh). After spitting on the piles of leaves the person performing the ceremony stamps them into the ground, steps over them, and walks into the village. I believe that basically it is the same thing, but it gets changed from area to area.

When one village hears that there is serious human or animal 'epidemic protection ceremony' (pu k'eu to-eu). This is to keep the sickness from coming to their village.

If the plague or 'epidemic' is still quite a long way off, they usually just kill a chicken. If it is quite close, however, they will kill a large black dog. After killing it they will skin it, keeping the head joined to the skin. They then prop the mouth open so that it is as if the dog is snarling, and stretch up the skin (kui k'o taw-eu) by the secondary gate (ka yeh). I was able to see them doing this at a Pa teh village in 1950 when they heard that small pox was in the area. They also asked me to send a vaccinator who lived just below my home to their village to give inoculations.

The mouth of the animal must be pointed away from the village to scare the spirit of the illness away. Since many have mentioned this it must be important to them. When they stretch it up the village priest will tell the sickness, 'Stay away from our village. There is no place for you here. Go to some other country. Etc.'

Instead of dogs, some Akhas in the past have used monkey for this, especially in areas where they were prevalent. But I have not met anyone who has actually seen a monkey head and skin, although several say that their father has seen them.

If a family has a sickness, and they want to insure that no one in the family dies a 'terrible death', they can call a spirit priest and have him perform a 'terrible death protection ceremony' (sha k'eh g'eh-eu) for their household. They call a spirit priest, and first of all give him a pre-ceremonial feast (shi ne ti-eu). Then he will make up an offering of eight dishes and repeat spirit incantations over them. These are to feed the last three females and the last three males who have died in the household. The theme of the 'incantations' is, 'don't let anyone in this house hold die a terrible death'. When the incantation is finished the ceremony is finished.

When Akhas meet up with a 'bad omen' (dawe tah pu le-eu), which presages the spirits doing something terrible to them, they must call a spirit priest to come and 'remedy the bad omen' (daw jaw-eu) for them. If they do that, then the spirits won't be able to do anything to them.

They consider the following to be bad omens: a dog or cow climbing up on the roof of one's house (a bad omen for both the owner of the house and the owner of the animal), a pangolin coming into one's house or being seen in one's field, seeing a slow loris (myo lah) in the field in the daytime, seeing a bamboo gopher (ho pi) out of its hole at any time, seeing two snakes entwined, running across a couple having intercourse, seeing two crabs going in opposite directions etc.

Only those people who are 'thin-souled' will see bad omens. It means that they have some kind of sin, and the spirits are going to get that type of person one way or another. Either the person will get sick, or someone in his family will, or there will be some awful tragedy occurs in his family. K-2 gave the example of this giving a kind of handle to the spirit so that it can afflict that person. K-28 and 29 said that if you do not tell anyone at all about seeing the 'bad omen' it will not afflict you.

To keep the spirit from afflicting the person who saw and told about the 'bad omen', that person will go to a spirit priest and ask him to repeat 'spirit incantations' (to-eu) for him. When they request the services of the spirit priest they must present him two banana leaf packages. In one there will be ashes from the fireplace mixed with paddy husks. In the other there will be some uncooked rice, some paddy, and some money. The amount of money varies. It will be whatever the person calling the spirit priest wants to give him. It will also depend a little on his circumstances, and also on the spirit's reputation. The old customary price was 30 pyas (six cents), but they often give more.

The spirit priest will take the two packages of banana leaves to the spot on the ground under the eaves of the house (caw dah ga za) on the men's side of the house, and repeat the 'spirit incantations'. When he is finished he will take the money out of the package that has the money in it, and leave the leaves and their contents in that spot and return home.

Sometimes a person does not even know that a 'bad omen' has occurred, as a dog walking up on his roof, until after he is sick. But a good shaman can often tell them what has happened. Even after they are sick, they will still call the spirit priest to come and 'remedy the bad omen' (daw jaw-eu) for them.

BODILY INJURIES

When Akhas have wounds, there are certain leaves (especially bracken that they chew up and put in the wound to stop the bleeding. They say that they have seen monkeys do this too when they are wounded. "The only way to kill a monkey is to shoot it in the head" they say. Sometimes they also use certain types of bark for bleeding wounds (Loimwe area). There is no idea of 'sterile technique'.

If leaves and bark do not stop the bleeding, they will often repeat 'spirit incantations' to get the bleeding to stop, or more often a combination of the two.

When they get a burn they hold it near the fire. "Our ancestors told us to bake a burn". There are also various concoctions they put on burns, much to the disgust of western trained doctors who later have to treat them.

If an Akha has a sprained wrist or ankle, he will take a little metal tool (k'aw deu), and heat it until it is red hot. Then he will beat the sprain with it. When the metal cools off a bit he will re-heat it and beat the spot some more. Some also beat small amounts of carbon into the sprain, for they say that it hastens the healing. Still others make a mixture of carbon, bear gall, raw opium, some marrow from a wild goat, and some 'sweet thatch, and beat it in. One Akha told me, (partly in joking), that white people could never invent anything for sprains that would be better than the above.

For purgatives, they give a mixture that they make from the roots of trees that are plentiful in the jungle. With this and other simple medicines, each family has its favourite remedies and mixes them up to suit their own tastes. For the more complicated mixtures, however, they usually call in the medical specialists.

One remedy for an eye injury that seems quite common among them is to have a woman who has a nursing child squeeze a few drops of her milk into the eye. "It often helps".

For simple stomach ache, they boil certain tubular roots and drink the liquid that is left. Here again different families have different remedies.

If someone is suffering from malaria quite badly, his friends will often give pig droppings that have been burned and mixed with water. Or they take burnt dung beetles and crumble them in water, or burnt earthworms. With these medicines they do not tell the patient what he is drinking.

They feel they must try some kind of treatment for anything that can go wrong with a person. When it does not do the trick, they try something else. When nothing seems to help the person and he dies, it is "because it was his time to die, and nothing can help him".

I met a young Akha from China (K-27) who learned from a Chinese man how to use magic to knit broken bones. K-26 said that this man had healed the foreleg of one of her pigs, and she praised him very much. If lack of modesty would help him ply his trade, K-27 must have been truly wonderful. He said that along with the spirit incantations he also blows on it (baw-eu).

When the patient has bad swelling, this is what K-27 does. First, he gives the person he is going to treat liquor to drink. Then he takes a needle and pricks the place to draw some blood, and then he pours some liquor on the spot. Then he blows on it and repeats spirit incantations.

In the Loimwe area many Akhas feel that the best treatment for swelling is to put some leaves near the fire until they are quite warm. Then they tie around the swelling with a cloth.

For older men who either want to regain their vigor or maintain what vigor they have, scrapings from the antlers of the samber deer where they are in velvet are considered to be excellent. However, people who are not yet 30 years old should not drink it, since it tends to have the opposite effect upon them. K-2 and his father thought this was why A dzo got deathly sick and had to be brought to the Kengtung Christian Hospital July 4, 1965. He had drunk some of this, even though his father warned him against it.

For snakebites, Akhas first of all cut the spot a little to let the blood out, and then suck it. After that they rub a type of medicine on which they make by rubbing some of a bean (ma ga a nui) onto a stone and then rubbing it on the spot. "It takes the poison right out". This bean is very dark. It grows wild. It is round and quite long. Before they grind it on a stone they break it in two.

When the snakebite is on an extremity, some will tie a string or rag above the wound, and then while holding both above and below the wound, they suck on it, without making any incision.

For mushroom poisoning, which occurs oftener than one would think, they set great store by pine tree mushroom (a type of mushroom that grows on pine trees). They keep it in their houses. Both K-28 and 29 had some in their homes. K-29 also had some in his 'medical bag'. When a person eats a poisonous combination of mushrooms, they take some of this, file it down on their 'medical stone', and put it in water to drink.

One of the most widely used remedies for mushroom poisoning is to give some of the powder that has been rubbed off the head of a turtle, mixed in water. Turtle's blood is also good, but more difficult to obtain.

As a magical type of cure for mushroom poisoning they also use an otter's leg. They rub it on the neck of the person who has been poisoned, always rubbing down, and tell the poison, 'Leave'. Both K-28 and 29 have some meat from the leg of an otter in their homes too, to use as medicine. They are quite amused and also surprised that the Civil Hospital in Kentung would not know about these sure remedies, and that people taken there with mushroom poisoning would be allowed to die.

If the above mentioned items do not work, or if they feel that a different approach should be taken, they will make the person suffering from mushroom poisoning vomit. There are several ways to do this, but one of the surest ways is to mix some human excrement (not the sick person's) into some water, and give it to him to drink. Since it is not 'proper' for this to be in someone's stomach, it will come back out, bringing the mushroom. Of course, they do not tell the person what it is they are giving him to drink, but merely say, "Drink this medicine."

K—29 told about a Lisu man who was unconscious and near death from eating poisonous mushrooms. They called K-29, and he made a concoction of the pine tree mushroom and some head of a turtle (both ground on his medical grinding stone), and mixed it with a woman's urine. You mustn't use Just water for this, but urine from a person of the opposite sex from that of the person who is sick."

First of all K—29 made the man vomit by sticking his finger down the man's throat. After he had vomited, K—29 gave the man this mixture to drink, and 'one hour' later the man became conscious, and later got well. The Lisa man gave him one kyat. Actually, he offered K-29 one load of paddy and a Chicken too, but K-29 said he turned this down, 'since he was old and not very well off'.

Akhas, and other hill people, can take an amazing amount of pain with their bear bites, broken bones, etc. One thing they sometimes do to help the pain is to smoke or eat opium. This is one reason so many of them get the habit.

THEORY OF DISEASE

Akhas feel that almost all illnesses, except those caused by accidents, poisoning and sorcery, are caused by spirits. One of the shaman's main duties is to find which spirit it is that is causing the illness. Sometimes they will find that a spirit has 'shot an arrow' into the sick person especially when there are chest pains. So the shaman, or spirit priest, who also knows how to do it, will first of all repeat 'spirit incantations', and quickly pull it out. The sick person will get well — that is, "If it is not his time to die".

They also believe the 'soul loss' (law ba bar-eu) will cause sickness. P-1 told of a man from his village who went to Kengtung once, and stole something from a store. He was put in jail and kept there until his relatives went down and gave the police the money for his release. After he got back to the village, he became quite ill. The father sent a younger brother to ask a shaman what to do. That night the shaman went into a trance, and the next morning told the brother that the soul was frightened from the jail experience, and had run away. The family called a spirit priest and called the soul back- and the man got well.

As for insanity, they believe that somehow it is handed down by the ancestors. If many of your ancestors have suffered from insanity, then your 'clan' (a' jeu) is 'not good'. There are certain things they believe can bring on insanity, such as eating a kind of honey that is made from a certain type of plant, etc., but these will only bring on insanity in a person whose background makes him susceptible to it.

They believe that paralysis (kui" shi' la shi" shi"—eu) is caused by a spirit in the form of a crane (hah, cah") flying over the person so that the crane's shadow hits (hah, cah" dzeh*_eu) the person. If they give medicine quickly, however, they can heal even this. One thing they do is to pound up leaves and tie them on all of the places that have 'died' (become paralyzed). Also, they give the person scraped bones to drink.

Some diseases they also feel are not so much directly caused by spirits, but are caught by contact. They believe, for example, that VD. (ga La na'-eu) is picked up by sleeping with an infected person. They have a medicine to clear it up, they say.

There are also very special 'diseases' which indicate that the spirits have chosen the person for a special task. If, for example, a person has been chosen to be a spirit priest, or shaman, usually when they are young they will have a special convulsion (u, ca mya le-eu). If elders do not give medicine quickly, the person will die. This is caused by 'u yeh u sa' to indicate that this person is someone special, and has been chosen to 'fall' (ga le-eu) a spirit priest or shaman. It usually happens when they are small, but it is confirmed by various signs later. (See more under shamans).

For those who have water on the stomach, they say that the sick person is pregnant with a spirit's child' (neh za eu,—eu). They can mix certain medicines and cure this - if someone who knows how to do it is present. If they cannot do it properly, they must also do the 'inside ceremony'.

Akhas believe that if a person who is sick is not careful in the things he eats, he will get worse. There is a type of convulsion they call 'si li ba'', which comes when a sick person has been eating the wrong things especially something sour.

Other disease. that Akhas say are directly caused by spirits are: swollen testicles (leh, u pu—eu), a type of rash that breaks out on the face (neh, mi, nap— eu). dysentery (u_ ma u, ne na—eu), and many more.

WEREWOLVES

Akhas fear 'werewolves (law pya) very much. They believe that the very first person to become a werewolf was a woman named Yeh' ho who lived in the walled town of Ja deh. She is still the 'spirit—owner' (yaw sah) of all werewolves.

The way Akhas say they can tell that a person is being attacked by a werewolf is that he holds his thumbs down tight with his fingers. Also, his eyes are bloods hot. Since their pigs, dogs, cows and horses can also be attacked by a werewolf; they will check their eyes to see if they are bloodshot.

If a person is sick and they think it might be a 'werewolf' that is causing the trouble, some elder will take a tiger's tooth and start punching the sick person and poking him with it in various places. If it is a case of 'werewolf', the person will start calling out, "Don't do that. I'm a werewolf. My name is so— and—so, and I live in such—and—such village."

There are both Akhas and Shan werewolves. If the person who is being attacked by a werewolf does not have it driven out of him, he is sure to die. Sometimes they beat the person to get the werewolf to leave. Another method they have of getting the werewolf to leave is this. They go around 'begging' three people for some urine ("it is best to have it from both male and female"). Then the one who knows how to do it dips a broom down into the bowl with the urine and slaps the urine on the sick person's face and shoulders, and proceeds to rub it down his whole body, while instructing the werewolf to leave at once. 'This works for sure.'

When they know that it is a werewolf causing the trouble, they will call a spirit priest to drive it out (1a pya teh-eu) by repeating spirit incantations. If they don't do that, the werewolf will drink the person's blood, and the sick person will, be sure to die.

To drive the werewolf out they use loud sounds. One man told me that they used to use elephant chains that had been 'left' in the jungle by the British before the war when they had elephants in Loimwe. They would shake these chains near the person to bring him to again.

Or they put a gun on the body of the person having the werewolf attack and shoot it off, so that the loud noise will scare the werewolf out. Or they put a board on the person's chest, put gun powder on it, and light it. K—2 saw both this and the shooting of a gun done to a boy of about seven or eight years, and the boy 'came to life' (deh. la—eu) 'right away'.

Those who know how will make medicine for the person being bothered with the werewolf, to drink. They take some scrapings from a tiger's tooth, which is a very essential ingredient, plus some other things, and force the mixture into the person's mouth. They also use the head of a turtle. Sometimes they take the head and press it against the person as if the turtle were biting him. Sometimes they take scrapings from the head and mix with other things to be given by mouth.

Also, they try to find the forehead bone of a human or even part of it, so that they can poke this at the person being troubled by the werewolf. They say that the bone of a person who has been shot to death is the best.

They say that no one need die from a werewolf, since they try one thing after another, until they find something that works. Of course, K-29 does not agree with this, since he felt it was a werewolf that killed his daughter. It should be noted that when they speak of the person 'coming to right away', this could be one, two, three hours - or sometimes even more - after the 'medicine' was given.

I bought a special 'hat' from K—29 made of leopard skin with the lining of flying squirrel (ho shu). This is to cure people being afflicted by a werewolf. Since the werewolf stays at first in the head or on the shoulders, they put this special hat on the afflicted person's head. When they do this the "werewolf can't stay there, and quickly leaves." If they wait too long, though, when the werewolf has gotten all the way down into the body, then that person will die. The hat must be put on so that the 'nose' part of it is to the front.

K—29 has probably cured at least 20 or so people suffering from werewolves - including a real old woman from the A aw clan who used to come around quite often. He bought it from a man named A' boe in 1957, having paid one old coin for it. It was an animal that had been killed in a deadfall trap. If it had been shot, it would not have worked.

In the group of men from Bajeh (K—23) the older man told me of how he was attacked by a werewolf one time when as a young man he visited Kengtung. Before he went to bed that night, he and his friends had been sitting around drinking some liquor, "although I personally drank very little then, since I was still just a young man".

During the night a werewolf came in and held him down, ready to bite him, he said. It looked like a giant brown dog, but it did not have a tail. This last fact must have great significance since he mentioned it several times, and others have agreed. He called out twisted and squirmed with all his might. and it left him and ran away. No one else saw it, but they were awakened by his screaming, and he told them what had happened. He said that if it had bitten him, he would certainly have died. I asked him what nationality the 'owner of the werewolf would be, and he said he was sure it would be Shan. "since I was in a Shari town that night". He and his friends then went on to say that werewolves can also come in the shape of large cats. Besides biting people they also bite cows, pigs, dogs, horses and chickens.

K-28 and 29 told me of an Akha man named Zo shui of K—28's village, who became possessed of a werewolf spirit. Even though his body did not go, his werewolf spirit would go and bite other people. The way it happened was like this.

There was a Shan man who lived near Zo shui who had a werewolf spirit. But he was tired of having this werewolf spirit, and wanted to move away so that he could get away from it. So he moved to Meung Ping. But before moving, the Shan man made kind of an ‘offering’ of things that were valuable: scales, the weights for the scales (lu ka”) in the form of chinthe, golden ear rings (shui na, yo), golden rings (shui’ la beh), some items of clothing, and his mattress (pa Si,). The spirit of the werewolf stayed in these things, and the Shan man moved off.

When the Akha man Zo shui saw these expensive things he took them, and the spirit of the werewolf then became his (nyaw—i—eu). Shortly after that there was a bad sickness in the village. The person who was sick became unconscious. They kept beating the sick person with a bamboo strip put through meat (sha. zo.) and punched him with a tigers tooth. They also fired off a gun (without any bullets in it) over his shoulder. They burned chilli under the sick person’s nose, since if he would sneeze, then they would know that the werewolf had left.

Finally, as the sick person was coming to he said he was Zo shui — but the people in the house told him to keep it quiet. They were afraid of a court case if it were not true. They also knew, however, that when he said the name, the werewolf was about to leave. Shortly after saying the name, the sick man jumped right up and was all right. He said that when he was very ill, he could see the tusks of Zo shui just starting to bite him, and that is when he became unconscious. But the family tried to keep it quiet.

Later there was another sick person who named Zo shui, at that time they kicked Zo shui out of their village, since they felt he definitely had a werewolf spirit.

Of course, the person does not usually realize he is the home’ of a werewolf. It is only as sick persons tell out that persons name that they learn what has happened. If they want to get rid of the werewolf, they must do as the Shan man did, and move a long way off. The werewolf will not want to make the trip, so will infest someone else in the area, especially someone who takes some of the goods left behind by the former owner’

When a person is possessed by a werewolf, Akhas oft en call out to it in Shan, “Ai, leu, Ai leh, leave the person.” Also when they call out in Akha they say. 'Leave the person. Yeh bo—o”. since they still consider her to be the ‘spirit-owner of werewolves.

There was lots of trouble in Jaw seu upper village over a woman who was considered to be a werewolf. There were three deaths that were attributed to her. She was then told to leave the village, but her husband and many of his relatives did not agree that she was a werewolf, so they all moved out and started the new village of Na seh.

VAMPIRES

Fairly closely related to the werewolf (la pya’) is the vampire’ (pi seu’). This type of person is said to suck the blood from dead people, which is why they have wakes with the broom and firewood. If the ‘vampire’ comes to suck the blood from the corpse, they can beat it off.

They also believe that vampires will cause the death of very weak people, especially children. To this day many Akhas do not want to stay overnight in hospitals for fear that a vampire will come and kill them. They are sure there must be many vampires around a hospital, since people are dying there all the time.

A vampire can take many shapes. Sometimes it is a hawk, or wildcat, dog, bird, butterfly, or what have you. If the father of a child who died from what they attribute to a 'vampire death' is very angry at the vampire, he may spend the night that the child has been buried sitting by the grave with his gun cocked. Whatever animal or even insect he sees come around the grave, he will shoot since he is sure it must be a vampire which has come to try to dig up his child and eat it. If he shoots, even if he misses the animal or insect, the vampire will be frightened and go away. Of course, they also sprinkle chilli powder on the grave so that a vampire will not dig down and eat the body.

Akhas say that vampires have a 'blue' (yaw nyoe") light emanating from their lips, teeth, and breath. From the description, I gather there is a beam of light going out of their mouth.

There is another type of 'light' that Akhas talk of which sometimes appears where there has been a 'terrible death' (sha). It is the 'will o' the wisp' (sha— a shin-eu mi, dza.). They do not seem to be as frightened of this as the Lahus however.

BLACK MAGIC

Akhas do not use black magic as much as Chinese and Lahus — at least this is what they say, and I think it may be true. The common use of black magic is to send an object (sometimes a roll of paper or leather which is made alive by the one who is sending it - neh pyeh.-eu) to make someone else sick. They can hear the sound of it taking off (like a hornet). Of course, they must say the proper magic formula to do this.

When a person gets sick from black magic, he often does not know it at first. But when a shaman goes into a trance she will tell him if it is black magic or not. If the sick person can find someone skilled at it, he may have the missile sent back (ja, neh po-eu) so that the sender will get sick from it. Failing that, at least he must have it removed. Among Lahus, they "bite" it out, and then quickly spit it into the fire. I'm not sure about Akhas. Sometimes they do not bite it out, but simply say the magic formula which makes the sick person well. (More should be investigated on this.)

K—19 told about how in 1960 a man in his village got quite ill. A shaman was questioned about the illness and she said that someone had performed black magic on him, although she did not know who had done so - or at least did not say if she did know. They sacrificed a dog and other animals for the man, but he is still not well and K-19 wishes they could find someone to carry him to the hospital, but his relatives won't help him.

MAGICAL THERAPY

Where there is some disease that needs to be cured by a magical means, for the most part the individual cannot do it by himself. The one exception I have found to this is when a person has goitre. He will sometimes get a gourd full of water down at the spring. He will tie that gourd with water in it to his neck, as close to the goitre as possible. On the way back from the spring he will untie the string that holds the gourd, so that it will fall to the ground and split open. This will often cure the goitre, they say. Also, they will go lie down so that a paddy pounder can be brought near to the goiter. Then they have a friend play—act as if he were 'pounding' the goiter, although of course the pounder does not touch it. Often this cures goiters, they believe.

When an Akha has a stomach ache that is long lasting, and 'medicine' does not seem to touch it, he will often do this. He will take the blade of his large hoe (tseh ma), and heat it in the fire until it is red-hot. Then a friend of the sick person will dip the sole of his bare foot into a mixture of ginger root and water, and after putting it on the red-hot hoe blade for an instant, will put his foot on the spot on the sick person's stomach where the pain is so bad.

If the above does not seem to work, they will take a small chicken, cut it in half, put a button—like silver ornament in it (a spherical silver ornament both men and women have on their clothes), and tie both halves of the chicken quite tightly to the region where the pain is the worst. Along with this they repeat spirit incantations' (neh to'-eu). If the stomach ache is finally cured, the person will never eat that kind of chicken (that is, white, striped, or what have you) that was used to affect the cure. Goat can be substituted for the chicken when available, but I have heard of very few cases where they actually used goat.

Spirit priest consulted.

When there is any sickness that is serious, or long standing, the family will consult a spirit priest (boe maw,), or shaman (nyi pa,). For lesser ailments, such as a common cold or stomach pain that lasts only a few days, they will treat it themselves. But if the ailment appears to be an affliction of the spirits' (neh gu, la—eu), they will usually consult a spirit priest or shaman.

The spirit priest does not need to come to the house to see the sick person, so the sick family will send someone to the spirit priest to ask his help. The person going to call him will take some uncooked rice for him, plus any other gifts the family wants to give. After giving the gifts, he will explain to the spirit priest who is sick, how long they have been sick, and something of the symptoms.

The spirit priest will then 'divine' (ceh si, tsi haw-eu - literally. 'consult the paddy grains'). This will show him what spirit is afflicting the sick person, and what sacrifice needs to be made to that spirit.

To do this he will take a dish with some paddy and an egg in it. First he will repeat 'spirit incantation' for a bit. Then he will take anywhere from about eight to twenty grains of paddy in his right palm. After a little more 'spirit incantation' he will say something like this, "If it is the 'house spirit' (dzah" mi) that has afflicted this sick person, let the rice grains come out even three times. Then he moves the grains of paddy in pairs of two from the palm of his hand until they are all gone. If they come out even, he takes some more paddy grains (about the same number as before), and does it again.

If they come out even that time too, he does it a third time. If the third time they also come out even, then he knows it is the 'house spirit', or whichever name he gave, that is causing the trouble. But if it comes out an odd number of seeds, then he stops that series, since the spirits have indicated that it is wrong. Once the paddy grains have been consulted, he does not use them again.'

Then he will, try another spirit, such as 'yaw mi' neh'. If that also proves wrong, then the 'inside spirit', 'water spirit', and so on, until finally he gets one that comes out with even paddy grains three times in a row.

When he has determined which spirit has caused the sickness, he has two possible courses. One is to tell the individual who has come from the family of the patient which spirit it is, and to go ask the shaman to 'see' which kind of offering that spirit wants, so that it will relinquish its hold on the sick person or stop eating the soul of the sick person, as the case may be. Or, the spirit priest can continue with the consultation of the paddy grains to see what the spirits want by way of sacrifice, or as they put it, the type of meat the spirit wants to eat'.

If he follows the second course, he remains seated where he is, and continues with the paddy grains. 'Do you want a pig? If so, let the grains come out even three times in a row. If they come out odd, then he will ask if the spirit wants a chicken, etc. When they find out what animal the spirit wants they then have to determine the number, sex and coloring of the animal to be sacrificed.

When he is finished with the divination, he takes the egg that was in the dish, and cracks it open in the dish. If it is fertilized (has a 'white man's eye', as they put it), that means that the patient is very sick indeed, and may die. If the egg is perfectly clear, that is a good sign. When the spirit priest has determined which spirit is causing the trouble and what sacrifice the spirit wants to eat, he tells the family.

If the spirit priest tells the family which spirit it is and asks them to consult the shaman to see what sacrifice to make, the family representative will go to the shaman's house, and ask her to go into a trance to see what sacrifice should be made. The shaman, who is usually a woman, will go into a trance during the night, and will tell them the next morning what sacrifice that spirit wants. It should also be noted that sometimes the family of the sick person goes directly to the shaman, since she can tell them both what spirit it is, and what should be sacrificed to that spirit, simply by going into the spirit world in a trance.

When the family of the sick person knows what spirit it is and what sacrifice to make, they must call in someone who can repeat 'spirit incantations'. Usually they will call a spirit priest, since usually they are the best at this, but they may also call a shaman, provided she knows how to repeat the proper spirit incantations. Or they may call in some elder who is good at it. No matter who they call, however, that person must come to the house where the sick person is to repeat the spirit incantations.

'Pre-ceremonial feast'

When the spirit priest, shaman, or elder arrives at the house of the sick person to repeat spirit incantations, whether for sickness or soul loss, the family of the house usually has a 'pre-ceremonial feast' (shim ne tin—eu) in his or her honor. If it is a spirit priest with a 'ceremonial knife' (they will call this feast 'La.. yeh shi. ne ti—eu'. Akhas believe that the pre-ceremonial feast, when carried on in connection with the spirit incantations, makes it much more likely that the sick person will get well. It is not obligatory, however.

For the feast, the one who will repeat spirit incantations sits in the place of honor. That is on the men's side of the house, on the side where they sleep (k'oe meh). The people of the house fix a 'rice table' (haw,.. eh) in front of him, with the following items on it: a big bowl of chicken curry, usually in the center a dish with a little cooked rice in it, a dish with a leg of chicken, a cup of tea, a cup of liquor, and a pair of chopsticks. These are put in any order that they want to on the side of the 'rice table' where the person of honor is sitting.

Then that person takes a little rice in his fingers from the dish of rice and 'drops it' (1a ka-ei) on the table near him. Then he takes a pinch of meat from the chicken leg and does the same, at the same spot. Then he does the same with the tea and liquor, by putting his finger into them one at a time, and then letting the liquid from that fall onto the same spot. After that, he repeats the process, but this time he brings his finger to his lips and 'eats the food. This ends the pre— ceremony feast.

Then the elders who are there gather around the table with him, and dishes of rice are put on for them all. They then eat together with the honored guest, using the chopsticks that were put on the table at the beginning. The only one that can eat the chicken leg is the one who will repeat the spirit incantations. Whatever is left over of the chicken leg after he (or she) eats it, is thrown into the fire. When the feast part is completed there is often a little repetition of spirit incantation, and some tying of strings on the wrist.

Spirit incantation for the sick.

After they have cleared away the dishes and the 'rice table' after this feast, they get ready for the actual time of spirit incantations. The one to do it must kill the sacrificial animal (usually a pig or chicken) with his 'ceremonial knife' (la. yeh,). The animal they will kill, of course, is the kind that the spirits indicated was the kind they wanted to eat. They kill the animal close to the fireplace on the women's side of the house (nym ma).

Then the people of the house prepare a winnowing tray with seven 'dishes' on it. It does not always have to be seven, but that seems the best number usually for this. These dishes will always include: onions, liquor, tea, holy water', and blood from the sacrifice. They put the tray under the ancestor shrine when all of the 'dishes' are on it. Then they lay the chicken or pig that was just killed by the tray.

The one to repeat 'spirit incantations' sits facing the ancestor shrine, with the tray before him. The tray and the things on it are an offering that he is offering on behalf of the sick person. The sick person must be in the house at the time, although he (or she) can be on the other side of the wall.

Then he begins to repeat the spirit incantations.

If it is a spirit priest, he will tend to speak in a modulated voice, with a lot of clearing his throat and pauses. A shaman, on the other hand, tends to speak more loudly and ecstatically. Also, the spirit priest must start his incantations in the daytime. although he can continue into the night if **needs** be. But the shaman must start her incantations at night, although she can go on into the daylight hours if needs be.

As an illustration. K—2 told of A pyeu speaking to the spirits for Sah. tse's son when he died. He started in about sunrise one morning, and went on until about eight that evening. During that time he could drink tea and smoke tobacco. But he could not eat rice, and he could not smoke opium. The latter may have been the biggest problem for him, since most spirit priests are opium smokers.

In the incantations. the spirit priest. or shaman must leave nothing out, because if he does, then the spirit will afflict' (gu, la—eu) him. If the person makes a mistake (toe leh,-eu), the villagers usually know it right away. With A pyeu they knew he had made a mistake when they heard the son's soul calling out. They could have fined A p'eu if they wanted to, but since he had nothing they did not bother. ("We couldn't eat his flesh." K—2)

If however, the person repeats the spirit incantation correctly, the sick person will get well — "if it is not his time to die, and if his 'luck—blessing' (gui, lah.) is big". If a mistake is made (to leh,-eu) however, even if the sick person's life should have been longer, the sick person will die, they believe.

It should be noted that they feel they must always start this incantation on a 'propitious' day for the head of the house where they are doing it.

Soul loss.

The above applies to when a person is being afflicted by a spirit. When the spirit priest or shaman has determined that the person is sick because of 'soul loss' (la ba ba_eu), the head of the house will call a spirit priest to come to the house and 'call the soul back' (la ku It doesn't have to be a spirit priest to do this, but almost invariably it is.

First the family of the sick person will give a pre-ceremonial feast to the spirit priest, as described above. Then the head of the house will ask the spirit priest what should be gotten ready in order to call the soul back. What the spirit priest has him prepare differs from time to time, and according to the spirit priest's wishes. Usually it is something like this: "Get three roosters and two hens. Then prepare the following five 'dishes': tea, 'holy water', liquor, 'holy rice' and meat." (Note: 'holy rice' is made of sticky rice, and also has an egg in it.)

Sometimes, the number of chickens will be just one rooster and one hen. Or perhaps one pig, if that is what the spirits indicated they wanted. If it is a pig, they usually kill a very small one. The same with the chickens.

When the people in the household of the sick man have arranged everything as the spirit priest has indicated, he then takes a winnowing tray with the specially prepared 'dishes, and put one white thread, and a piece of clothing from the sick person on it. If it is a man, often they use his turban. If a woman, they often put one of her bracelets on the tray. The important thing is that it be an item of daily wear.

Then the spirit priest walks up to the village gate (law kah) with this tray. If the sick person is a small child who has not been out of the village very much, he will stand and call from inside the gate. But if it is a grown person who has been out of the village a good deal, the spirit priest will go beyond the village gate to call. He will put the tray down on the ground, and then will begin to call the soul in flowery language.

He will say something like this, "Come back, A lm (or whatever the name may be). Though you have left the body once don't make it forever. Come back. We don't know where it is that you have gone (and he lists the various possibilities), but wherever it is, come back. Pity your mother and father (if he is a child), and come back. Pity your wife and children (if he is an adult), and come back. Remember your home and return. Etc."

The spirit priest will carry on along this general line for some time, and then pick up the tray with the things on it, and return to the home of the sick person.

Meanwhile the head of the house will have someone stationed at the door to announce the return of the spirit priest. When he learns that the spirit priest is returning from the village gate, he will have the sick person get up and eat some rice while squatting near the fireplace. Even though this effort may drain his final reserves of strength, the sick person will have to obey.

Sometimes the spirit priest will call from outside, "Has the soul come back?" They will chorus from inside, "Oh yes, the soul, came running back just a little before you returned." Then the spirit priest enters and sees the sick person sitting by the fireplace eating. The people assembled there then say to the spirit priest, "The soul. has returned, look, he's eaten to the full," This last they say even though he has managed to get only two or three grains of rice down his throat. But they say it to show that he is perfectly healthy now and has a good appetite. When the father and others say, "The soul has come back", the spirit priest often says, "Of course the soul has come back - I called it back didn't I?" Sometimes the spirit priest then takes the white string that was on the tray and ties it around the wrist of the sick person. In some areas they tie it on the right wrist if it is a boy, the left if it is a girl, but in other areas they tie it around the right wrist only for both sexes. While tying the string around the wrist the spirit priest will say, you'll get well all right. Before long you'll be perfectly fine again. Though the soul depart. once, it doesn't leave forever.' This last is a very common saying and is repeated over and over to calm everyone's nerves. The purpose of the string is to keep the soul from running away again. Of course, if the soul didn't actually return to the sick person he will die.

The spirit priest will give a little of the food from the tray to the sick person to eat. Some say that it is usually some of the rice in the 'holy rice' that is fed first to the sick person, and then to the others who are gathered in the home.

The head of the household will then often present some kind of gift to the spirit priest for his troubles. It may be money, or cloth, or a hand of bananas, depending on his circumstances, and also depending on what fruit is in season. Theoretically, at least, it is not obligatory to give a gift.

Driving out contagion.

When a bad contagious disease breaks out in a village, they 'k'a da, ci,—eu'. To do this they first of all make little clay figures to represent all of their animals. Among these figures will be the figure of a person riding a horse. That is to represent the plague riding out of their village.

Then they put all of the figures in a dish, and ever one spits on them. After that, the head of the house will say something like this, "Listen disease, why do you want to come here? Leave! There is nothing to eat or drink here. Go to where there are big roads and places to eat and drink."

Then they take the figures from their home to the home of the village priest. All the dishes with figures from the whole village are put on his open porch (gui' ga). When all of the villagers are there with their figures, the village priest takes a white rooster, kills it, and cuts up the meat. He puts some of the meat that has blood mixed with it, and some of the meat without blood in front of the animal representations, which are placed so that they face away from the village. The hope is that the figures will eat the offering and leave.

Then the village priest says, "Those who like the 'white' (bloodless) meat, eat it. Those who like the 'red' (mixed with blood) eat it. There is no place for you here. Go to a place where there is plenty of room. There is no means of getting food here. Go to a place where food is plentiful."

Then the villagers carry all of the figures on a long bamboo frame past the secondary gate, and throw them away in the jungle. After that they put up a 'bamboo star' (da leh) between the village gate and the figures to keep them from riding back in. Then someone (it does not matter who), fires one shot from a gun.

Insanity.

When a person becomes insane, they will call a spirit priest to repeat spirit incantations for him. There are also two ceremonies that the spirit priest can lead in: 'clear the tragedy' (u, ca shaw,-eu), and 'purify the insane' (tsaw m shaw—eu). For the second they must offer a brown goat, plus lots of pigs, chickens, and other offerings. (These are described elsewhere.)

Stomach trouble.

K-25 told me that when a baby has loose bowels the parents *will* take a copper Chinese coin with a hole in it (gui shui meh bya) and tie it around the baby's waist. K—29 substantiated this, but said it was best to have a cowrie shell. (hue si) tied along with it. Also, he said that before tying them around the sick infant's waist, a person who knows how to do it must repeat spirit incantations over them in order to have them cure the trouble. K—29 knows how to give such incantations.

Affliction of spirits.

When a person is sick because of the affliction of the spirits, they sometimes do the following. They take a magic vine (meh) and tie it in a loose loop. Then the person in charge repeats lots of spirit incantations over it, spits on it, and then strikes the sick person with it (meh lu di—eu). If the loop becomes untied, then that is a good sign. If it does not become untied they must loosen it a little and hit two more times quickly. But this indicates that it is a heavy disease' (na gaw yaw kah). That is, the sick person will take a long time recovering.

'Lightning bolts'

When animals or humans have been killed by lightning, their hair, teeth, flesh and bones are all valuable for both magical and medical therapy, as is the 'lightning bolt' (tso) which struck them. If you have items from humans and animals that have been struck and killed by lightning around your home, then your domesticated animals will not die. Soon after I had bought a 'lightning bolt' from K—29 he had three pigs die. He was quite sure they died because he no longer has his lightning bolt, since his pigs never had died before, even when pigs of other people all around him sickened and died.

Concerning the 'lightning bolt' I bought from K-29, which is actually a bronze aged head, he pointed out the 'hollowed out part' (k'a, bah) and said that if it did not have that it was not considered a 'lightning bolt'. Actually it is the place where it was hafted to the handle, but since it is so completely different from what they have now, this is the interpretation they have figured out.

He showed me how they grind the 'lightning bolt' on a stone, mix water *with* the particles, and then give this to a person suffering from nosebleed. There are various ways of giving it to them. His method is to sprinkle some of it on the top of the person's head (who is having the nosebleed) three times, and then have them sniff some of it up. "It always heals."

When a person has a swollen leg, it is caused by a type of water spirit called 'yaw mi neh'. Again they use filings from the 'lightning bolt', mixed with water, and apply it to the swollen place. Then they beat it in with a metal tool (k'aw deu).

They say that there are also 'copper lightning bolts' (gui, tso), and 'stone lightning bolts'. These two types are not so expensive since they will, not heal so many things or give so much protection. But if they have any of these three types of 'lightning bolts' in their possession even if someone shot at them, the bullet would not enter.

There is one precaution they must take with the metal lightning bolts. They must nick or chip off a place so that it will not go 'back up where it came down from in a year or two'.

Crying infants.

K-29 told me of a magical therapy they have to prevent infants from getting sick. On the day that a baby is born, if it cries a lot, they are afraid that this will attract spirits and werewolves. So they 'bury a cowrie shell' (hu si hu g'oe, pah—eu, or, 1a pya tsah, tsah—eu).

Usually this is done by the father. He takes some rice and an egg and puts them in a dish along with three cowrie shells (hu si). He then takes the dish down and puts it on the ground below the house, and below the spot where the baby is. While putting it down there he will say to the werewolves and vampires, "Don't come eating my child. If you want something to eat, eat this."

He will leave it there for a month, until the child has 'hardened' (g'ah 1a—eu) and is not so susceptible. K-29 has done this for each of his children, but K-28 has done it for only two out of four of his since only two of them cried a lot.

Shan magic.

K-29 had something with his medicines which looked to me like a little petrified human molar, with a carving of a Buddha on one side. He said he bought it from the Shans for one old coin, and that it was made from clay 'long, long ago'. He said that if he boils it, and then has someone who is going to a court case wash his face with that water and drink a little of it, the judges will go easy on him and 'pity' (g'aw, sha, ga-eu) him.

Effectiveness.

It is extremely difficult to judge the effectiveness of magical therapy on the sick person. For one thing, the spirit priest and the relatives of the sick person are ready to say, "Oh, it was just his time to die", if he does not recover from the treatment. If he

recovers, of course, the spirit priest takes full credit for it. No doubt there are some who are genuinely helped by their faith in the spirit priest, although that is having a tendency to break down now, with more and more people being treated by doctors in Kengtung and a few other centers in Kengtung State.

Magicians.

There are also 'magicians', more in the western sense, among Akhas, "but not as many as among the Shans." K-28 and 29 seem to believe implicitly that these magicians really make things disappear, etc., through the ability to 'repeat spirit incantation'. For example, a man will take a match and 'sa' la' toe-eu', and then press it into the back of his head. It will then come out of his mouth.

Or those who can perform magic (maw lo lou-eu) can take their turban and throw it into the fire, and then pull it out when it is almost burned up — "and it is not burned at all". K—28 says that a close relative (a nyi) can do these things. One thing he can do is to take an empty dish, cover it with a blanket, then put a coin under each corner of a blanket, and after 'spirit incantation', when he lifts the blanket, the coins have all gone into the dish.

They sometimes get money for these tricks, but again "not as much as Shans do". For the most part they see" to be happy just to impress people, or to use whatever notoriety it gives for their own ends.

MEDICAL THERAPY.

It is often difficult to know whether they consider certain remedies medical or magical. They often use a mixture of the two.

A 'medicine bag'.

They sometimes tie a series of 'medicines' together by a cord. I bought such from K-29. He says that they can all be boiled in water, then the sick patient is given a little of the water to drink, and they are bathed with the rest. "It is good for almost any sickness (na gaw)". Contents:

1. The claw of a hawk. This hawk, plus any part of any other animal used in this, and for any medicine, must be an animal that has been killed by a tiger or the like (dza, tseh). They must not be animals that people have shot, for they are worthless for medicine.
2. The claw of a pheasant. This is good to file off and give to an unconscious person to drink. It will bring them around.
3. A bit from a plant in the jungle called 'saw—m, baw" (Shan, nam ma, ha). It is sour. They break a little of it off and burn it along with charcoal. Then they put this in water for the sick person to drink, and also bathe the sick person with it.
4. A part of a bone of a buffalo killed by lightning. This is especially valuable to have in the house to keep one's domesticated animals from dying.
5. A bit of vine called 'sham nyoe"', which makes excellent medicine for stomach aches.
6. Part of the skull of a porcupine (ho pu) that was killed by a tiger.
7. A bit of a pangolin shell. K-29 said that when a woman is bleeding badly after giving birth to a child, they rub off a little of this, take three hairs from a person who was killed by lightning, and burn them a bit. They put this in water and have her drink it, and the bleeding stops.
8. Some panther (seu pa,) skin. The skin is reddish, with some white portions. All of the animals in the cat family (k'a, la,) are afraid of this animal (I guess it is panther). Spirits are also extremely frightened when they smell some of the fur of this animal being burned.
9. Some bones from a python. They use this especially to get animals that they buy from others to be more tame. They mix some scrapings of it with human urine and give to the animals to drink. Actually, even better than the bone is a python tongue.
10. Long black hairs from the whiskers of a billy goat that was killed by a tiger.
11. The bone of an otter (tied to the whiskers), also killed by a tiger. This type of bone, when powdered, is good for when things get stuck in one's throat.
12. Metal charms (la paw'') bought from Shans
13. Tied to the charm is a very small portion from the horn of a buffalo killed by lightning.
14. A piece of bone from a gaur (neh nyo). It was not killed by people. The ones who gave it to him said that spirits had killed it. It is the section from the ' forehead (neh, nyo, u, lah), which is the best section of bone for making medicine.
15. The bone from a wild goat. This is good for when your legs are sore or tired from walking.

He did not buy most of these things, unless they were animals killed by lightning. If it was from an animal killed by a tiger he would beg the owner for something from that animal, and since the owner knew that K-29 would use it for medicine, he would give it to him.

He also had in his bag the lower jawbone of both a tiger and a wolf. These are good for several things, including curing people who are having trouble with werewolves (la' pya').

He also had a special 'medicine filing stone (jam g'a, ai,—eu k'a, lo). It was made by the Shans. It had a groove in it so that the filings and water can wash down into a cup or the like.

He also had a part of a shell from a certain type of turtle (boe_ bya). When a person has a deep ulcer, K-29 powders some of this and rubs it into the sore. "Even when you can see the bone, this will cure it."

He also had a little bundle of hairs in Shan paper which he bought from Shans. He thinks it is from a Shan woman who was killed by lightning.

He showed me a 'porcupine stomach' (ho pu baw ma), also bundled up in an old piece of Shan paper. Akhas usually keep this over the fireplace, he said. When someone vomits badly, they boil some of the contents from the porcupine stomach and give it to him to drink.

He also had part of the hoof of a wild goat (ya). This is good when a person has gall bladder pains. They press it against the place where it hurts. Also, when a person's legs hurt they rub this on the calf of the leg.

He also had a mushroom-like growth that grows below the ground in a hollowed Out place (a ji ja leh). They use this for goiters, vomiting, and those who are weak. For the last group they must eat very small quantities of this daily to build up their strength.

He also had what looked like a piece of iron ore (shm lo). This is excellent for when arms and legs swell up. They also use it in combination with copper ore (gui lo) and 'gold ore' (shui to). I doubt that there was any gold in the piece of 'gold ore' he had. The three together are excellent for treating various swellings (yaw mi neh gu, la-eu).

Various other types of medicines they also use are:

- Limestone, which they rub on a woman's breast when it hurts.
- The root from the 'lah sha'' plant. They plant this both for food (it gives a hot taste to the food), and for medicine, especially for stomach aches.
- A plant (ji ne) which is good for dysentery as well as ordinary stomach trouble. They plant it.
- A plant (sa tsi) which is good for a cough, as when a person has tuberculosis.
- A 'medicinal vine' (ja g'a, ci ni), which grows in the jungle and is good for stomach aches.
- A plant (bui leu), which is good for both stomach trouble (including vomiting), and swelling caused by 'ya mi neh'. They plant it.
- A type of parasitic plant (sha toe.), which grows way up on trees, and is hard to find. They file this on a stone and give it to people who have gone insane or who have epileptic fits.

‘Caved in termite bill’ (t̥sa, pu mi’ ga). is used much the same as the medicine above, and often mixed with it. Sap from a certain tree (mya do) that has dried. They give it to people who are real thin, but must give only a very little at a time, since it is poisonous. They use the sap when it is ‘fresh to poison the tips of the arrows.

Part of the nest of a great hornbill (hah, bya hah, tee), which it makes around the hole into its nest when the female, is setting on eggs. It is made of a combination of blood from the kills of the great hornbill and mud. Akhas break this off and use it as medicine for a woman who has given birth, and has severe stomach pains. Also, it helps to keep down bleeding then. It is taken internally. It is very expensive. K—28 told about a villager from his village buying 30 kyats (\$6) worth one time.

They file off some of the ischial callosity (a myo claw, g’a) of a monkey and rub it in for backaches. They give the filings of the paw of a bear (k’a, hm la k’aw) to a woman who is bleeding badly after birth. They boil the skin of a type of rodent (ho la,) in water, and then rub the liquid on their arms when they hurt.

The excrement of the ‘ui tsaw’ people (ya hi, ya la, or, ye, yeh ya la, or, ui’ tsaw’ cc.). These are ‘spirit people’ who live near streams in extremely remote sections of China, according to the Akhas. They go around naked and eat only raw things. They are not really humans. They are very small and cannot speak. They are very afraid of people, so run off when people come near.

If anyone can shoot one of them, he would get three or four thousand kyats (according to K-28 and K-29), since the Shans, Akhas, Lahus, Chinese, and other people in the area would want to buy the meat and bones. The excrement that K—29 had with him looked a little like a cross between resin from some tree and raw opium - although it was hard. When a person has a fever, they give them some of this, and have them wash it down with water.

All of the items listed above, K-29 had in his ‘medicine bag’. There was also the tooth from a person who had died of lightning, but I did not get details on that. He also had a little lead plate about two inches square that he had purchased from the Shans, with numbers in squares on one side, and the pictures of eight animals on the other. He said he did not know how to use it, but he carried it around. Those who know how to use it can look at it and know whether it is a good day to travel or to do this or that. It was made by Shans, and primarily used by them.

Diseases Akhas can cure’.

Following are some of the specific diseases Akhas believe they can cure with their Akha medicine: A type of itch (a gaw a ma dzui eu) they get especially in the rainy season. There is a medicine they can apply. Also. they sometimes tie a string around a place where it is bad, and puncture the skin with a needle. If the blood comes out, it will heal.

For ‘bladder stones’ (lm bym km -eu) they give medicine to drink, and the ‘stones disappear’. Scabies (ma gui dzui—eu), which they recognize that they get from others, can be cured with medicine they have, they say.

Malaria (mi hi, pya,—eu) they also say they can cure, but I notice that they are always anxious to get Western anti—malarial drugs whenever they have a chance.

There is a disease of the testicles where they swell up and split open’, that they call, ‘sheu leu na’—eu’. They must use many things to make a special medicine for this. If we don’t put medicine on this right away, the person will die.”

MEDICAL CARE.

Akhas feel that one of the most important things for a sick person, besides his medicine, is his diet. A sick person, for example, must never eat anything sour. If he does, he will get worse. If a sick person eats cucumbers, he will become insane. They do not eat buffalo meat when sick, nor will they eat sow meat. They would certainly die if they did, they believe. When sick they must also refrain from eating the meat of white chicken.

I have heard of at least one disease where they feel that diet may help cure it. When a person has malaria, if he will eat the meat of an animal that has been killed by a tiger, just as the life of the animal has ended (tseh), the disease will end (tsch) too. and he will get well.

They do not believe in the isolation of sick people- the more friends that crowd in and around the sick person the better, unless it is epilepsy, leprosy, or insanity. These they consider highly contagious, and so they stay away from such sick persons.

There is no idea of resting in order to get over a disease. You repeat spirit incantations in order to get cured. You only lie down when you are too knocked out to keep going.

When a person becomes insane there are various magical things they can do (described elsewhere). But if he is too bad they also build a kind of cage, often at the edge of the village, and put him in it. They do not feed him too consistently, feeling that when he gets hungry he will, get well. If he can work his way out of the cage, they feel that he is well enough to be allowed loose. Often this is correct, since until he becomes rational he cannot figure his way out.

When someone contracts smallpox or leprosy, Akhas drive them out of the village. Those suffering from leprosy must make their own way in the jungle, or go to another village. For those suffering from smallpox. they have some who have had the disease and recovered take care of them.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL.

Some villages have no one who knows how to make Akha medicines. Some have several. A, baw A eu (K-2's father) is very good at it, and is called upon by people all over Naw leh mountain. K-29 is also good, and called upon by people in the Kengtung town area. These are usually Akhas, although some other hill people and a few Chinese and Shans go to him too.

When a man who knows about Akha medicines gets old and can no longer go Out to get the ingredients he needs for the medicines, he will send his son or someone he trusts, with directions for the things to get, and how to mix them. Thus the one sent will gradually pick up the knowledge of the other person, plus learning some things by trial and error.

Many of these men are out for all the money they can get. They'll tell the person coming for the medicine that they have, to go a couple of day's journey to get the ingredients for the medicine, when it is just ten feet away. Also, when they take certain leaves etc. to mix in the medicine, they grind them up so fine that the sick person won't recognize what they are. This prevents the sick person from learning how to compound that medicine for himself.

Akhas believe that an odd number of ingredients must be mixed. Also, they feel that ordinarily medicines must only be given to drink in the morning or evening, never in the middle of the day. The rates they receive differ according to the seriousness of the illness, difficulty of getting the medicine, length of time the person is cared for, and the ability of the sick person and his family to pay.

Za po (P-1) told about going to get an Akhui man to come see his mother when she had skin cancer. The man had a terrific reputation in the area. Za po finally found him, gave him K 2.25 (48 cents) to prepare medicines for his mother, and arranged to meet him on a certain day in a village about half-way between the two villages. Although the sum of money does not seem great by Western standards, this seemed like quite a bit to Za po but the Akhui man assured him that it was 'a difficult disease to cure.'

When the day arrived Za. po was in the village, but the Akhui man did not show up. P-1 waited an extra day, but still the man did not come. So P-1 left word for the man to come treat his mother but the man never appeared, so P-1 lost his money.

P-1 told how when he was on his way to call the man, he met many people who encouraged him to call him. One man showed him his daughter's leg which had been broken by a cow stepping on it, but this medical practitioner had healed it so that one could not tell it had been broken.

I have referred above to K-27 from China. He told me, " have cured every single person I've treated." I asked about the rates he got. Just being called in on a case means that they must give him K 11.25 (\$2.36). Then when he is successful, as with sprains or cuts, they must make it up to K 18 (\$3.78). When it is a broken bone that he cures, they must give a minimum of K 100 (\$21), but K-27 admitted that he tried to get K 200 or so when he thinks he can.

This is the only work he does, and he seems to be able to make a good living out of it. But he is the only Akha I have met or heard of who made a living at this type of occupation. The fact that he lives near Kengtung town probably makes it possible for him to get enough clients to make his living this way.

MARRIAGE AMONG AKHAS

BASIS OF MARRIAGE

Akhas say that Tah pah, was the first one to get married. She married nine husbands all together - they died one after the other. Apart from this statement, I have not been able to elicit any concept of marriage that they might have, or a theory of how marriage starts. Akhas tend to look down on those who do not get married. They will often scold them by saying something like, "Even though you are healthy, you are not contributing to the increase of people".

The actual selection of his wife is pretty much in the hands of the young man. He looks for a girl that is pretty and a hard worker. He must also be happy with her sexual abilities, which he usually tries out several times before asking her to marry him. The adults stress the fact that the girl must come from a family that does not have a history of insanity or epilepsy. For the most part the young men do not concern themselves with this aspect too much.

When the two are married, the girl leaves her extended family (pa) completely, and joins the extended family of her husband. She calls her husband's parents 'mother and 'father, just the same as her husband does. Her children that she will, have by her husband will, belong to her husband's family.

REGULATION OF MARRIAGE

If an Akha girl wants to get married when she is just twelve years of age or younger, the parents can prevent the marriage, since she is not 'of age'. As they put it, 'she is still too soft (yaw nah). But when she becomes thirteen years old, which is a full cycle to the Akhas, then she can get married, and the parents can do nothing to stop her.

Maw boe (K-2) told of 'marrying' a girl of 13 once when he was about 17 or 18 years of age. The mother begged the girl to return to Nawleh, where the mother lived. But she could not force the girl to come home, since the girl was 'of age'. Maw boe said he would not object, since she was so young. At first the girl herself refused to return. Later she ran back home during the night, leaving all, of her clothes in Maw boom's home. Since they had not had a wedding ceremony (oe m ba-eu), they were not considered married.

Some boys are said to get married at 13, but I have never heard of any getting married that young. The Akhas believe that if a young boy (say 14 or 15) gets married, it is because some older girl has enticed him into the match.

There is a proverb they have which tells the best minimum age for marriage:

Mi ya shi—i ta i, k'a ji g'oe-i ta la

Mi ya shi—i i na i shi.

K'a g'o—i la—a—a La seh.

'Girls who are not yet 17, don't get married.

Boys who are not yet 19, don't get married.

Girls who get married before they are 17 will 'go marry death'.

Boys who marry before they are 19 will 'fetch death as a bride'."

It is hard to determine any 'average age' for marriage, since up to the age of 30 or so there is a lot of divorce, running home on the part of the bride, adultery, and experimentation going on. They consider this to be an age when they should experiment.

By the time they are 30 they usually have the wife they want to keep, and some children, so they begin to settle down. They are then considered to be 'married men and women' (tsaw' k'a a da, tsaw kla a ma), instead of just 'youngsters' (za gu). But there are also those Akhas who have never been divorced, but have been married to the same spouse for many years (P-1 P—3. K-6, K-17 K-28, K-29).

There do not seem to be any mental bars to marriage, and the only physical one I have found is that both the young man and young woman who intend to get married must prove themselves physically capable of having sexual intercourse. This is especially important for the man. But usually he has already proved this ability, not only with the girl he is going to marry, but with many others as well.

Akhas must always marry someone outside of their clan - at least this is what they give as an ultimatum to all their youngsters. But the youngsters do not all follow it. Also, if there should happen to be anyone within their 'extended family' (pa) whose clan was different, they can marry them but I do not believe this happens very often. Anyone related to them on their father's side must be at least seven generations removed from them.

By seven generations they mean that the young man must be able to count at least seven ancestors who are dead in his genealogy before he gets to a common ancestor to the girl. If this taboo is broken, they believe the couple will have short lives' (zi ma, baw—a).

When young people do not marry in accordance with the above restrictions, the relatives will sometimes try to talk them into divorce. Failing that, the relatives will often 'cast them out of the extended family' (pa dzeh dzeh-eu). This means that the relatives will then have nothing to do with the couple the rest of their lives, and when they die, they will not perform the customs for the dead for them.

However, there is a ceremony the related couple can perform which is designed to 'break the relationship' bonds (daw tseh di-eu). They butcher a pig, and feast the village first of all. Then the man gives 8 old coins and 25 pyas (about \$1.7 at 1966 rates) to his paternal male relatives (apart from his brothers) who are older than he (ta tsui). Before all the family and the elders the young man says that from then on, these relatives are no longer to consider him a kin to them. After that the two can get married, since they are no longer in the same clan, or closely related.

Some Akha elders I have talked with (especially K-28 and K-29) abhor this custom, and say it is 'evil' (yaw doe). It means, of course, that that man can never live in the house where his father's ancestor shrine is, nor can he be present when they have an ancestor offering (a poe, law-eu) in the father's house. He can however, have an ancestor shrine of his own. A tu (of Na seh) did not perform this ceremony when he married his first wife, and later on he felt that the death of his daughter was the result of not performing it. Since then his wife died as well, so perhaps he feels this is double proof.

Since one's mother's brother's daughter is not in one's clan, most Akhas feel it is all right to marry her. However, they must not get divorced, since that would put the young man in the position of being in a 'taboo relationship' (zah do) with his maternal uncle. This would be an extremely strained relationship, since the maternal uncle (a,, g'oe) is very important in many of their Customs. So the maternal uncle will ask his nephew very carefully if he will, take care of his daughter well - meaning of course, not divorce her. Only after the young man has promised will the maternal uncle allow the match to take place.

If the young man marries his cross-cousin, and then later does divorce her, he must pay an additional fine (dah leh ti geu ka leh ti yaw) which comes to 8.50 old coins. He must also give a 'burial fee' (tsaw gah, tsaw ceh) of 4 old coins. They are afraid that his cousin will have a short life after being divorced by him, so this is why he must give this amount. If she marries again before dying, however, he gets that money back. If at the time he divorces her she is pregnant, then he must give an additional 22.50 old coins, since this is a more serious complication.

Akhas do not marry parallel cousins (cah peh), since that would bring lots of sickness and bad luck. Any children they have will also die, Akhas say. One or two informants said they had 'heard' of such marriages but I have yet to meet anyone who could name someone they knew who had married a parallel cousin (that is, a mother's sister's daughter).

There are some cases of the grandchildren of two sisters (cah kui cab la) getting married. Akhas seem to feel this is much better than parallel cousins getting married, but many still frown on it. For the most part my informants in the Loimwe area looked down on cross-cousin marriages. Many said that they are wrong', and by checking the actual marriages in their villages, I have corroborated this feeling to a certain extent. But in the northern part of the St.ae, cross-cousin marriages occur as often as "one or two in a village".

In the past Akhas said they must never marry two women on the same day. But, by their own statement, they do not seem to follow this now. When I asked if they knew of anyone who had done this, they usually said, No, but a person could do it if he wanted to".

The proper time for marriage is between their New year, which usually corresponds roughly to the Chinese New year, and the time they plant their paddy, about April. However, if a girl is pregnant and must get married, it does not matter what time of year it is. Also, young people may sleep with members of the opposite sex any time. But the main time that young men go, often in a group, to some other village looking for a wife, is following the New year, and before rice planting.

Akha men generally practice village exogamy, and almost always tribal endogamy. Very seldom do you find a married woman who is living in her home village. And very seldom do you find an Akha man who has married a woman from another tribe, although it does occur quite rarely, as in the case of a man who helped care for one of the pagodas in Kengtung, whose father was Akha and mother Shan. But in that case the Akha man had evidently left the Akha village and moved into a Shan village.

Akha women tend to marry outside their tribe much more often than Akha men. It is fairly common to hear of Akha women marrying Chinese, Lahu, and Wa men especially. There are also a fair number married to Shans, as well as more and more getting married to Burmese and Karens who are soldiers or traders. The girl's fathers will scold them if they marry out of the tribe, but often the mothers encourage them, since they feel that their daughters will not have such a rough time as when they marry Akha men.

If the girl marries outside of the tribe, but wants to remain in an Akha village, she and her husband can 'embrace a clan' (par daw daw—eu). This means that they ask someone to 'sponsor' them by giving them some 'fermented rice' (ji ba ji' si) so that they can establish an ancestor shrine in their home. They will usually ask some family from the same clan as the Akha wife, and from then on they will be in that clan. When the children recount their genealogy, however, they will jump from the name of the Lahu, or Chinese, or Wa father directly to Tah pah A zo's sister and Chinese husband did this in Pa teh village.

MODE OF MARRIAGE

In the Akha culture, the young men pretty much decide who they want to marry. If the girl is willing the young man will tell his father or his older brother. The girl will tell an older sister—in-law, or very occasionally an older brother. Even though the parents and other older relatives are not happy with the match, there is usually very little that they can do to prevent it. Sometimes when they try to keep the couple from getting married, the couple will run off into the jungle and stay there. Finally the parents feel obligated to call them back and have a wedding feast for them.

The Akhas I have talked with disagree strongly with what Telford said in his thesis about Akhas eloping. Of course he may have gotten his data from an area I did not check. The girl's parents really have nothing they can say or do to stop a marriage their daughter wants to enter, unless she is not yet 13 years of age.

The groom's father is sometimes very stubborn, and may refuse to let the couple stay in his house after the wedding. Moreover, he will refuse to give any of the fermented rice from his ancestor altar to the boy so that he can go make a new one in a new home, which is the normal system when the married son leaves his father's ancestor altar. The threat of this, or the actual carrying out of the threat on the father's part, will make the young bride think twice about marrying the boy, however, since she will not want to live in a home without an

ancestor shrine. Actually, it is the same as being barred from an Akha village, since everyone within the village must have such a shrine. However, if the young couple is deeply in love and determined to make a go of it, the boy will often beg some fermented rice from someone outside his 'extended family' (pam.), and set up his own ancestor altar with that. If that is what he does, however, he leaves his own extended family and clan for good, and becomes a member of the extended family and clan of the one who gave him the fermented rice. The Akha elders look down on this very much, and feel that if he does this, for three generations the members of that household will have 'short lives' (zi' a baw-a).

ARRANGING A MARRIAGE

In the average Akha village, the young men find plenty of opportunities of sleeping with girls of either their village or nearby villages. This is their principle means of 'courtship'. The general pattern is something like this. After the evening meal, a young girl of marriageable age will send a little girl to her friends to tell them privately, 'Let's go to the playground and dance tonight. Boys are coming from such-and-such village.

When the girls of marriageable age get to the playground (deh k'ah), they start their 'sing—dance (deh k'ah. geu,-eu). Then the young fellows come and start their gourd-pipe dance (la je tsaw—eu), on the same playground area. Both groups keep doing this for some time, showing off to each other. Sometimes the young men will stop their dance, and one of the group will 'sing a love song' (mi,, da za, da car—eu) to one of the girls he is especially attracted to. These love songs are sung only in such settings. The Akha term for this is not used in polite society, and under no circumstances can it be spoken to a person who is in an 'embarrassing' (sha, daw-eu) relationship to them.

After this has gone on for some time and they begin to get sleepy, the younger ones will usually go home. But the older young people will couple off and sleep together in the jungle. Akhas have a saying that if a couple wants each other, when they sleep in the jungle they will, be warm even though they have no blankets, and they will not get hungry for three days.

The couple does not talk about marriage each time they sleep together, but if they have slept together many times, and are coming to love each other, the boy will bring the matter up and ask the girl if she wants to marry him. Usually, if they are not at the point ; where they are ready to talk about marriage yet, the girl will get up and go back home before sunrise. But if they are agreed upon getting married, she usually sleeps with him all night, and only goes home in the morning. There is a precaution the girl will usually take ‘ during this ‘courtship’ time, especially since there is always the chance of her becoming pregnant. She will try to get something of the boy’s wearing apparel. Often when he is about to leave he will say, “I’ll come back to your village and visit you again”. She will say, “How do I know you are telling me the truth?” So he will give her a bracelet or something of the sort, as a kind of pledge. After they have ‘courted’ for some time, she may give him a gift too. P-1 told how that when a boy sleeps several times with a girl, but refuses to give her any of his wearing apparel, the older girls and women will urge her to steal something of his, and will tell her how to do it.

If the girl does become pregnant, then the boy whose bracelet she has, or whatever the gift was, must marry her. If, however, the girl is not pregnant and either she or the young man change their minds, they do not return the gifts. Sometimes a girl will exchange gifts with more than one boy. When she becomes pregnant the first boy to sleep with her (or to give her a gift at least) must marry her. If they arrange for the marriage in the proper’ Akha way, the boy will next tell his father that he wants to marry so-and-so (giving the girl’s name). His father will then go to the father of the girl and say, “Let your daughter become my daughter-in-law. I’ll take good care of her and see that she is never poor.”

If the girl’s father is happy with that boy, he will. then say to his daughter, “Le-aw,” (literally, ‘go up’ - which means here, “Go get married to him”.) But she will say, “No.” He will say, “Don’t you want to marry him?” And even though she does, she will say “No’, since “girls are bashful, about discussing such things with their fathers”. But usually the boy, girl, and the fathers work it out so that everyone is happy.

NUPTIALS

When it is agreed between the boy and girl and their parents that they will get married, the boy will lead some of his friends, including some young married men, to the village where the girl lives. The term in Akha used to describe a young man getting married is ‘fetch a wife’ (mis za, a,-eu). For a girl to get married they say ‘go-work—eat’ (mb dza iw_eu), since Akhas practice virilocal residence.

I have heard of one case where the girl’s father (P-1) told the boy that wanted to marry his daughter that he must come and live with the girl’s family. Part of the reason may be that the father was a Christian, and did not want his daughter to live in a non-Christian village. But both Christian and non-Christians in the area were terribly upset by this. Some said he was trying to act like a Lahu’. Akhas do not even have a term for uxorilocal residency, but must use a borrowed Shan term.

Before the girl leaves her parent’s home, the parents may present her with a dowry if they wish to, although this is not done much any more. In the dowry there will usually be a set of clothes, some silver ornaments (that hang down from the head dress she will wear when she is married), a small hand hoe (la. ngeu), a machete, some sticky rice, a chicken egg, and the head of a pig. Besides this the parents can put in whatever they want to help the girl set up housekeeping, such as dishes, cloth, and other household and personal items. Their term for preparing the dowry literally means ‘filling the carry basket’ (kla beh daw-eu).

If the parents give the girl a dowry, they will usually make a big occasion out of it. They will call the elders of their village, who will come in and feast with them before the girl leaves. After the feast, while the parents are 'filling the carrying basket', one of the elders will repeat a poetic chant (sha, zi zi eu), in which he will, tell about the girl who is going to get married. It will cover the time from her birth to the present, and will extol all her virtues.

When the wedding party leaves the bride's village, the groom-to-be will take off his jacket and put it over his bride—to—be, as if shading her from the hot sun. While walking along the trail the young men accompanying them will 'yodel' (eu ceu gu-eu). This is a type of 'singing' which is almost more shouting than singing. It can be heard for miles.

If it should happen that the couple about to be married have not had intercourse as yet, which is an extremely slight possibility, they must do so there in the jungle before they get to the groom's village. They look 'upon this as 'proof' that it is all right for them to get married. Also, I heard one man (a baw la bui) may that Akhas say this is like "testing a machete before you buy it".

When the party gets back to the village, the young man will take his bride-to-be to his brother's house to stay until the actual wedding. This is called her 'resting house' (nym na.). If he has no brother, it will be the home of some close relative, as an uncle. During this time, the young man will get a pig, plenty of tea, liquor, and other items needed for the wedding feast.

Shortly after the girl, arrives in the village, the mother of the boy will boil an egg and go feed it to the ' girl. This signifies that she accepts the girl. However, she must do this whether she is in favor of the girl or not. If during this period of preparation, even after the girl has eaten the egg, she returns to her village and does not go through with the wedding, it is perfectly all right (yaw bah,, ma ja - 'there is no fault').

When the boy has gotten things together fairly well. for the wedding, he will send one old coin (worth about \$2 in 1966) to the girl's village. One of his friends will take the old coin to the village priest (dzoe ma) of the girl's village and give it to him (mi,, k'oe, je, doeu). This money is not considered as payment for the girl in any way. It is a sign of respect to the elders of her home village. it acknowledges the fact that the village elders had a part in helpi.ng to raise the girl, and took care of her in sickness and health. It is a form of thanking them.

When the village priest has accepted the old coin, it is considered that the wedding will definitely take place, and everything must proceed to that end. If the girl, returns home after this old coin has been given, and does not get married, then her family must pay the boy for all the liquor, pork, rice, etc. which he has gotten ready for the wedding.

When the boy has gathered enough food for the wedding, the couple will get married on the first day that is propitious for the boy's family. The actual day is announced ahead of time and everyone in Lbs village is expected to attend. No one from the bride's village comes, however.

On the night before the actual wedding, the young man can take the girl out to the jungle and sleep with her, but he must get her back to the house where she is staying (nym' na.) before daybreak. For the first two nights after the wedding ceremony, they must not sleep together.

On the day of the wedding, the bride walks into the groom's house. There will be a young girl with her. The young girl carries the head dress (u, coe') for the bride. The bride-to-be has made this head dress with her mother's help, and it will be put on as part of the wedding ceremony. It will, indicate from that day on that she is married.

Up to this time, she has not worn a woman's head dress, but only a girl's cap, unless she is a widow or a divorcee. She must also wear a white skirt for the wedding, although the rest of her outfit (bodice, jacket and leggings) are what she wears every day.

She and the young man she is marrying then go to the fireplace near the dividing wall (law ka) on the woman's side of the house. The two of them boil an egg, and then while sitting together on stools by the fireplace, they hand the egg around each other three times (g'a lu ir-eu). The boy, who is seated on the right, first takes the egg in his right hand and passes it behind his back to the girl, who takes it in her left hand behind her back, and brings it around front and hands it to the boy, who then passes it around behind her again. After doing this three times, they must each eat a little of the egg.

After that, a younger relative of the groom kills a small chicken and cooks it. The bride and groom then eat that chicken. No one else must eat any of it. This is called 'the meal of joining' (dza ta. dza—eu).

After they have eaten the chicken, the girl puts on her head dress (U,, coe coe-eu), and they are officially considered to be married. From then on they must help serve tables, and generally be busy serving those who have come to the feast.

It might be well to note that as they do these various things in the wedding ceremony, there are not very many people who actually watch them. To watch the actual ceremony is not considered to be important. There must be one or two elders present who know all of the steps to take and who will guide them. But for the most part the other people are busy carrying water, tending fires, cooking rice, and generally doing other things.

Next the groom collects his friends, and they catch the pig, usually a big one, which has been prepared for the wedding. They carry it into the house, and put it on the floor of the men's side, with its legs securely tied.

At each wedding there is a special 'guest of honor' (yeh maw), who is usually an elderly woman. She has been selected by the groom's family for this position. She has certain obligations throughout the ceremony. When the pig is brought in she is the one who will bring in two small bamboo sections of fermented rice and put them near the pig. Then she will 'ceremonially sprinkle' (kui la sheh-eu) the legs of the pig.

After that the groom and his friends will stab the pig in the best place to get it to bleed to death. They have a bowl to catch the blood. The second it starts spurting out someone will hold the bowl so as to collect all of the blood he can. When the pig is dead they proceed to sing scrape, and cut it up. The liver is taken out and the elders are called in to 'read' (gui—eu) it — that is, to look at it to see what signs it reveals. They can tell from the liver whether the marriage will be good or not. The groom and his friends then cook the meat, while the women cook the rice. Some of the meat is left raw, and chopped into fine pieces. They chop it so fine it looks as though it has been ground. They then mix the blood they caught in the bowl with this finely chopped meat, and make balls of it. This, with liquor, is very popular at a wedding feast.

When the meal is ready, the elders are called first, and the food is fixed on the 'rice table' (hay, jeh). There is a special dish fixed for the bride and groom, which they must eat together. It includes some meat from the foreleg of the pig, and some of the liver.

While the elders are eating their meal, the couple will take the ribs of the pig (jeh te jeh dzm) and divide them up among the various elders of the village in accordance with their position. When one group is finished eating they leave and others come in and eat. They keep eating in relays like this until everyone has been fed.

When everyone has been fed someone from the groom's family inverts a winnowing tray over the main 'rice table' (hay eh) which shows that the feeding is over for that day. The couple then go into the woman's side of the house, and sit side by side on stools, with a blanket over their heads. A spirit priest (boe maw) stands on the other side of the partition and throws cooked rice (haw) over the partition while he calls out blessings on the young couple. The 'guest of honor' (yeh maw,) stands on the side with the couple and throws rice over the partition to the spirit priest's side, although she does not call out blessings. When the spirit priest's aim is poor and the rice he throws does not land on the couple, the 'guest of honor' will tell him how to improve his aim ("a little more to the upper side'). This is the end of the ceremony for that day. The elders who have received ribs from the pig take them and return to their homes.

As night approaches, the 'guest of honor' (ych maw,,) takes the girl to the house where the girl is staying (nym' na,), and the boy sleeps in his own house.

On the second night the bride remains in the husband's house, but she sleeps on the woman's side, and the husband sleeps on the men's side. I asked K-28 what would happen if they slipped out and had intercourse. 'If they did that, their 'luck—blessing' (gui lah) would definitely decrease.' On the next evening, however, the two of them go to their little sleeping hut, built near the main house, and sleep together. If a sleeping hut is not built yet (as with K—28), the boy takes his bride sometimes to the little shed-like place (say la, pa) where they keep their cotton, pumpkins, squash, and things like that. Under no circumstances must they have intercourse in the paddy house or on the porch of the paddy house.

On the day after the actual wedding ceremony, the man that the couple has chosen to see to the distribution of the meat will come to the basket where the meat has been put. He will take one of the pig's ribs and return home. This is somewhat like 'pay for his help the day before. Until he has taken some of the meat out, no one else must take any.

After this, the young men gather around and make curry from the meat that is still there. After the curry is done they call the elders. They set up one table on the men's side, one on the woman's side, and one close to the opening of the partition for the guests. They then feed them rice and curry. They must leave these tables up until night time, feeding the different groups that come.

The whole day the guests sit around the tables eating as much as they want. Friends from nearby villages also drop by and eat with them. A lot of drinking goes on all day. Partly inspired by this, the young men love to wad up balls of rice in their hands and throw them at their friends across the room.

Early the next morning, the new couple goes around 'begging for blessings'. Using Chopsticks, they take three pieces of meat along with one piece of liver, and put them into a 'rice bowl' (hay glaw). They do this three times. Then they take a bottle of liquor and the ne. basket with the meat in it, and go to the old ladies first. They offer them some of the liquor and meat, and then ask them for a blessing. After they have gone around to the ladies, they go to the men's side and ask blessings from them. The ones they ask blessings from can give them gifts of money if they want. The amount is entirely dependent on how much the giver wants to donate. Whether they give a gift or not they all call down some blessing on this new couple such as, "May you have long life, and your animals multiply, and your rice crops be good.

After begging the blessing they put a boiled egg and some sticky rice into a 'rice bowl' (haw, g'aw), and take it along with a gourd of water and a loosely woven basket that they use to carry things in on their backs. The young couple go out the door on the man's side of the house, and while on the covered porch they break open the egg and eat it, along with the sticky rice.

Then they start to enact 'gathering firewood'. But before they do this, they put on old clothes. The bride also covers up her head dress. Together they rush down the steps and over to some little sticks that have been fixed for them there, break them with a machete, throw "them into the basket, and rush back to the steps and up onto the porch. The reason they hurry so is that the children of the village throw buffalo dung mixed with fermented rice at them as they do this.

I have asked why it is the children throw the dung and fermented rice at the couple, and have been told, "Oh, it insures 'luck—blessing' (gui lah). But further inquiry brought out the fact that even if they did not do it, the couple would still have 'luck-blessing'. It boiled down to the fact that the kids enjoy doing it. I have been told that the couple must not strike at the children when they throw this concoction at them. They are considered poor sports if they even scold them. I also learned that in some villages the children also get soot from pots and rub it on the faces of the couple, "just to have a good time". I personally have never seen this, however.

When the couple gets back to the porch, they wash their hands and feet. Then the groom's mother takes some uncooked rice, one piece of ginger root and some meat in a 'rice bowl' to the home of the 'guest of honor' (yeh maw). This is to say thanks to her for helping in the wedding. The bride also boils an egg and takes it to the 'guest of honor's' house. She eats a meal with the 'guest of honor', which they call 'eating new rice'. Then everything is finished for that day.

The next morning the 'bride' (mi, shui — 'new wife') must go and carry water from the spring. Following that she goes out and gets some stalks of wild banana tree, the kind they ordinarily feed to their pigs. While she is gone, the husband kills a chicken and makes curry. When she returns some of the banana stalk is put on the table with the chicken curry, and they both eat rice and curry, plus a little of the banana stalk. Actually, the banana stalk is not especially tasty, and is not a regular part of the human diet. But the Akhas say that if the new couple will eat it, it will insure them getting luck-blessing', even as the shoot comes up out of the banana tree when it is cut, when this meal is finished, everything that has to do with the marriage its elf is considered to be finished.

After the ceremony, whenever the young couple wants to and also whenever they can afford it, they 'visit the bride's home' (daw deb g'a shaw shaw'-eu). They go one at a time for this visit sometimes the girl goes first, sometimes the boy. The one that goes takes a small hen one that has never laid an egg. They also carry a bottle of liquor. He (or she) kills the hen when he gets there, and cleans it out carefully, washing the entrails, but he does not cut it up. He puts the entrails back in and boils the chicken whole.

Later when they eat the hen the one who brought it must not partake. After the hen has been boiled, the young groom (or bride) fixes the following dishes: one dish with the whole chicken in it, one dish with tea, one dish with liquor, one dish with a boiled egg, and one dish with five 'rice balls' (a leh) in it. Two of the 'rice balls' are white, and three are dark. He then takes the string which he has brought along to tie around the bride's parent's wrists, and dips it into each dish. Then he takes that string and ties it around his mother-in-law's wrist. Following that he takes another string, and after dipping it in each of the dishes (as above) he ties it around his father—in—law's wrist.

While tying it he will pronounce kind of a blessing (jeh, tsa-eu), the gist of which is: "I do not tie this string to the ground. I do not tie it to a horse. I tie it to your wrist while asking 'God' to give you not only long life, but ten lives. Etc." It is very long. If only one parent is living, they do this for that parent, If both parents are dead, they go to the girls brother's house, and tie a string first to the brother's wife, and then to the brother. If there are no brothers, then they must beg someone from a different clan from the husband's to become their 'adopted male relative' (sha pyaw, a mah'). From then on that couple will act in the same capacity as the girl's brothers would act if he had any. After tying the strings, they eat the food, except for the person who brought the hen.

There is another ceremony that follows the actual wedding at the house where the young couple is living (za, mui, shaw"-eu). Either the father or one of the brother's of the bride, if the father is not living, carries the bride on his back (eu-eu) once around her house, and then puts her back down in front of the ancestor shrine.

There is an optional ceremony that Maw boe (x-2) told me about. Me did not do it himself, but he has known people who have. In this ceremony (yeh dah shaw e u), both the husband and wife go to the wife's parents, or the wife's brother if the parents are no longer living. They drive a 'big pig', and the people in the house where they are going also provide a 'big pig' for the ceremony. If the parents are living, the couple give them six mo.' of money by weight which comes to K 16.20 by 1966 calculation This money is given to the parents while they are feasting on the pork. and is considered as pay for the milk the daughter drank as an infant (a, coe daw poe)

Then after the feast in the wife's village, they take the head of the pig that was donated by the parents or brothers back to their home. When they get home they cut off the meat and cook it. and then call all of the elders in for a feast. From then on the girl is considered fully and completely in the husband's clan. Her family has no call on her any more. Relations are pretty severed with her family.

TERMINATION OF MARRIAGE

When an Akha woman wishes to terminate her marriage, she can simply run away. If she does this, she must not take any children of the marriage with her. I have heard of cases where she has done just that, and then the elders were called in to settle the matter.

If she just runs away with the clothes she is wearing, the marriage considered dissolved, and both parties are free to marry someone else. However, they are in a taboo relationship to each other from that day on, and must not speak each other, unless it is through a third party. Also, must not speak to the new spouse of their former for they are also in a taboo relationship to them. If a man wants to divorce his wife, he tells her and the parents divorce (as A mui,'s sister and Law, zo, of Jawseu village).

If the wife commits adultery, the Akhas take a very strong stand on the matter, and feel that the man must 'divorce' (k'o-eu — literally 'send back') her. I believe that this is to insure the 'purity' of their line of descendants, which is an extremely important matter to them.

One man (P-1) told how his younger brother's wife went with him (P-1) to Nagui village once, about a month after the marriage. She did not want to return to Naw haw with her brother-in-law (Za, pod), but wanted to visit with her family for a few days. He finally gave her permission, and returned home.

That night she went to the dancing ground, and went off and slept with a boy. Some of the young men from Naw haw saw this, and hastened back to tell the older brother (who was more or less the 'legal advisor' for his younger brother, whose wife she was), and the husband.

The young men who reported what they saw said, 'Hurry up and fine her. Don't let her come back here'. The older brother went with some elders from Naw haw to Na guiv village and discussed it with the girl's parents and the elders there, but they could not come to terms. So together they took the matter to the sa ma ti (government representative) in Pateh village to settle the matter.

I believe it is important that there was 'never any as to whether or not the girl should be divorced. That was taken for granted. The question was how much they were going to fine the girl's male relatives (a, mah a da). The government representative finally fined the girl's family 90 old coins, to be paid to the groom's family. In order to pay it they had to sell, a buffalo. Za pot said that he really felt sorry for the girl. He had liked her and hoped that the marriage would work out well, but of course they could not even allow her to return to the home where she and her former husband lived. She just had to leave everything of hers there. The match was dissolved, and later they both remarried.

SECONDARY MARRIAGES

When a woman's husband dies, she is not to remarry before three years, according to Akha custom. But in actual practice it is usually much sooner. With a man, if his wife dies, he is not to remarry until after three months, but again actual practice is often different.

When her husband dies and there are children, the widow must not marry anyone in the husband's clan. If there are no children, evidently there is no restriction. When a man's wife dies, he must not marry his wife's sister, although I believe there have been a few cases where they have done so.

If the wife is pregnant when the husband dies, and she remarries, that child will belong to the parents of her former husband. In case it is a girl, however, there is some opportunity for discussion regarding who should have her. In some cases the mother can keep her. A widow is not supposed to go to the dance ground (deh k'ah) until at least one month after her husband has died, and then she must not go into the jungle to sleep with any boy. This too breaks down in practice.

If a widow remarries, and there are children by the first union, she must eat a 'meal of separation' (g'aw, za dza—eu) with them before leaving. It is a ceremonial type of meal. The rice table (haw jeh) is fixed up somewhat like the meal of separation for the dead, with a broom, piece of firewood (to show the division), and banana leaves on the table. After they finish eating, the mother gets up, walks out, and shuts the door behind her. She and those children are then in a taboo relation (zah do), and must never speak to each other. again. But they do speak, provided it is outside of the house. They cannot talk together if there is an ancestor altar in the house with them. Of course, if there is no ancestor shrine, they usually feel free to talk together. When the widow leaves the house, she must take nothing with her except the clothes she is wearing. If she is leaving a boy behind, then she must also leave any silver ornaments that she is wearing. If there are no children, or if just girls, then he can wear those.

When a widow remarries there must be an extra 'spirit incantation' (toe-eu) repeated in the village where the wedding is to be held. This special incantation (zi g'aw to—eu) is to keep the new husband from having a shortened life by marrying her. The important elements are one egg and one chicken, plus a little money (ti ceh) for the man who repeats the incantations.

If the former husband died a 'terrible death' (sham), however, they must have a goat (sha shin zi g'aw tow u ci), plus a chicken, plus one old coin. It is also a more complicated spirit incantation. Except for this extra incantation, the marriage ceremony for a person who remarries is just like the original.

If a man and his wife separate, and then later the man wants to remarry her, there are three distinct fines he must pay. First of all, he must kill the biggest pig they have in the village, and give the whole village a feast, no matter how expensive it might be. Then he has to pay a fine (zah" pi tin-eu) which comes to 45 old coins. On top of that he has to pay another fine (k'ah, je ti-eu) which comes to 22.50, besides which he must give 11.25 to the 'male relatives' (a,, mah a,, da) of the woman, which is called 'k'm, ma a, mah a, da dza je,'.

The reason a man must pay so many fines is that Akhas frown on this very much. They feel that once a man has divorced a woman, he must never remarry her. It does not happen very often, from what I can learn.

IRREGULAR UNIONS

Akhas feel very strongly that incest is a terrible sin, and will certainly shorten the person's life. K-2 told of Dui lah and his sister Dui pa from Na, gui (near Nawleh). They were full brother and sister. She was married and had one child, when her husband died. She and her brother started living together, and so the villagers drove them out. They moved somewhere near Taung gyi, and the husband joined a gang of bandits. He was killed. The wife also died. K-29 also knew of them, and confirmed the story.

K-2 also told of Tsa, gay from Nawleh who married his father's second wife after his father died. Her name was Mae, yeh. They ran away. sand before long both were dead". K-29 told of two of his cousins who got married. The wife died not too long after the marriage, and not too long after that (about 1950) the husband was killed by a tiger. All Akhas would agree that this is fitting judgment on the couple. K-28 told of a couple just arrived in Kengtung (Li hui s wife's brother) who were driven from their village, because "they had the same grandfather.

CELIBACY

The Akha have quite a bit of contempt for older bachelors (yo dze yo maw,) and for spinsters. dze" mi,, maw,). They consider them 'holy' (yaw shaw') as far as religious ceremonies are concerned (that is, they can attend), but they also consider them to be stupid not to be able to get a mate. And they also feel that somehow they are not carrying their weight in the matter of reproduction. They will scold them for not helping the population increase. There are very few such. Ask an Akha and he will probably be able to name no more than one or two of each sex that he has ever known or heard of.

REPRODUCTION

CONCEPTION

Akhas are extremely anxious to have children - especially sons. If at all possible, they like to have a son, then a daughter, then another son, another daughter, etc. keeping a balance between male and female (mi, yo zaw kui). To them this is ideal.

Akha mothers believe that they can tell what sex the child will be by the way it lays in the womb. They say that if it is a boy, it tends to be more in the right side of the womb. If it is a girl, in the left side. Also, they say that if the mother has slept with another man, it will be a boy. If the father has slept with another woman, it will be a girl. Then further they say that if the father engages in lots of 'men's activities' (especially hunting) while the child is developing in the mother's womb, it is more likely to be a boy. But if the father does 'woman's work', then it is likely to be a girl.

Both the mother and father will try to influence the sex, especially when they want a son, by saying, 'Let it be a boy, let it be a boy', over and over. They do not seem to know to whom they say this, but they think it helps. They admit that they do not always get what they ask for, however. "We get what 'God gives Us.'" If they get a girl, and want to have a boy next time, they will often give the girl a name like 'Mah caw' ('go help find a brother'). This will not be the official name, of course, but the one they use daily. If there is a second girl, they will often name her 'Mah law' ('go fetch a brother'). If there is a third girl born, and no boy as yet, they may call her 'Mah zeu' ('go buy a brother'). If a fourth girl is born, they often dress her in boys' pants and cap, hoping that this will bring a son. An Akha woman who has just girls is called 'ma seu. I asked what they call, a woman who just has boys, and they said, Oh there is no name for her. We just say she is 'lucky—blessed' (gui. lah. hui)".

As to their theory of paternity. Akhas believe that women become pregnant after sleeping with a man. If it is her husband and she becomes pregnant, it is 'lucky- blessed' (gui lah hui). If she has no husband, it is 'bad luck' (gui lah, yaw do.).

Conception is caused by the man 'inserting' (ya,-eu) the seminal fluid (a dzi). The woman, on her part, 'comes to a head' (bytç-eu). although through association this term has also come to signify morning sickness. When a person dies, in the spirit incantation that guides his soul, he is told to return to the ones who conceived you (Bym meh ya meh jaw ga g'o le'-aw) They have no means of contraception that I have discovered. They do not use coitus interruptus. They say, It is up to 'God' whether we get a child this time or not. They do observe continence (at least theoretically) on different occasions, especially the night before some important undertaking such as an ancestor offering a hunting trip, or any 'ceremonial abstinence' (lah—eu). Also, after twins are born, the parents are to refrain from intercourse (kui la lah-eu) for a whole year. Following a regular, normal birth, they are to refrain from intercourse for five months. When there is a death in one's household, they are to remain continent until the body of the dead person is buried. This will be three months or more if a buffalo is offered, but closer to two months if there is no buffalo offering.

When a young man is angry at a girl who will no longer sleep with him, or perhaps will not marry him, he will sometimes do this. He will go to the figure of the female outside the village gate when no one is watching, and rub his hand across the area between her legs made to be like her private part. While doing so he wishes in his heart that that girl will get pregnant by someone, so that she will have to marry a good-for-nothing. But if the elders discover that he has done this, the village priest (dzoe ma) will fine him two pigs; one to make a new offering to the figures outside the village gate, and one with which to feast the villagers. I have not met any Akhas who admits that he has done this, but everyone I talk to about it will say, I have heard of people doing this.

STERILITY

The general feeling among Akhas concerning a person who is sterile (zeu dzm tseh—eu) is that he or she has committed adultery. Although others may not know about it, it comes out in their being sterile. They believe that the ancestors 'block the ditch' (ui k'eh ui ga la tsoe—eu). They also have a general belief that having the wrong mate may cause the sterility. Since the shamans (nyi pa) are reputedly experts in this matter, they often are consulted. When a man consults a shaman regarding sterility, after she has her trance she will often say something like this, "Divorce your wife and marry another woman. You'll have more children than you'll, know what to do. with." Often the men do that, or at least take a second wife, and often they have children. But not always, as in the case of A' zo Naw haw village.

Sometimes sterile women also consult shamans. The shaman will often tell her to leave her husband and marry someone else. Then she will, have lots of children. Sometimes the sterile couple will go together to the shaman and 'beg' her for a child. When they go, they must take some cloth, rice, an egg, a chicken (K—28 says four chickens), a pig (or four pigs, according to K-28), some uney (usually about 8 old coins), and other items. For this reason, "Poor people do not often do this". They ask the shaman to get the 'child-maker spirit' (zap me—eu zap sati a ma) to allow some children to be born to them.

They will put the gifts they have brought to the seer down below her ancestor shrine. The shaman then will, go into a trance, and ask the ancestors for a child for this couple. That night, or any night soon thereafter, if either the husband or wife dreams of water coming down from a lake, they will get a child. If they dream that there is lots of water coming down, then they will get lots of children. If a boy is born as a result of the shaman's intervention, the parents must give a whole new set of clothes to the shaman, as well, as a long silver chain (yeh saw the kind men hang on one side of their jackets). If it is a girl, they give the shaman a new set of clothes, plus a large silver ornament for a woman's head dress (na tei). They also must give the shaman some money. There does not seem to be any set amount for this, only not as much as they want to". They must also kill a fair sized pig, and give the shaman and elders of the village a 'pork curry feast' (yeh dzrn ci neh,-eu).

PREGNANCY

Akhas believe that pregnancy comes from a man and wife sleeping together. But even more important than the actual sexual intercourse is the matter of the time being just right for both the man and the woman. If it is right for only one, then there will be no pregnancy. This may be connected with their belief that there are three 'child—maker spirits' (za m—eu za sah a,, ma) living in each person. They allow a woman to become pregnant by releasing water from the 'lake of children' (zeu za zeu lah). The shamans (nyie pa) say that they can see this lake when they go into a trance. The more water released from this lake, the more children will be born. If a baby is born and dies within one, two, or three days, the Akhas say that the 'child—making spirit' has decided to take the child back.

Pregnancy is determined from the cessation of menses. If the woman misses two menstrual periods in a row, she considers herself to be two months pregnant, but she is too embarrassed to tell anyone about it. They believe that up to the fourth month. 'God' is still forming the child. After the first four months. the child comes to life and begins to move around. If a child is delivered after nine months of pregnancy, they believe it will be a girl. If the child is delivered after ten months of pregnancy, it will be a boy. If it is over ten months, it is almost certain to be a 'human reject' (tsaw caw).

During the period of pregnancy, both husband and wife must refrain from going to the homes of people with great 'spiritual potency'. such as the village priest, village elders, and any who know the Akha religion well. They feel that the. spiritual power will somehow be too much for the unborn child. They don't visit such people. Also, the parents of the unborn child are very careful during this period not to argue with people, curse others, or do things that will call attention to themselves. They are afraid that such action might cause 'human rejects' to be born. Also, the husband and wife are careful during this period not to eat on the uncovered porch (gui' ga).

During the pregnancy there are certain times when the husband and wife must observe continency. After being pregnant for one month, the wife must allow one cycle of days (13 days) to go by before having intercourse with her husband. That is, on the night of the 14th day she could sleep with him. Of course, often at this time they are not sure she is pregnant, yet.

When the second month of pregnancy comes, she must figure out a double cycle (13+12=25 days) before she can sleep with her husband again. This timing is from the date that she sets conception. After the third month, it is three cycles (13+12+12=37 days). and so on to the fifth month. But after the fifth month, they say they can sleep together any time they want, 'where is no more taboo.

Wife's responsibilities.

While she is pregnant, the Akha woman is expected to do just about all of the work she would normally do. One very strict taboo she is under, though, is that she must, under no circumstances, leave her husband and return to her father's home. If she should return to her father's home and die in childbirth (which the Akhas predict would surely happen for this type of behavior), it would be one of the worst tragedies they could encounter. There would be innumerable tragedies in her extended family' (pa) for nine generations. A polite term that is used for a pregnant woman is 'one who is living under another' (a caw,-eu la o aw—eu). I imagine this comes from the fact that a pregnant woman must not run away from her husband, but must remain 'under him' at least until the birth of the child.

During the time of her pregnancy, the woman will be very careful in all of her social contacts. She will not go visiting much. She will try not to walk in front of adults, since this is not 'proper' (ma cah k'm—a). If she hears people begin to quarrel, she will get up and leave at once. If she hears someone curse another, or especially if she should hear the word 'twin', she will jump up and run away, fearing the effect such talk might have on her unborn child.

She is very shy about her condition, and will go to great lengths to hide it from others. When talking with people she will try not to face them, but will be turned in such a way that her condition won't be evident. Such behavior I approved by the elders. They feel that if a pregnant Akha woman is too bold, she is just opening herself up to have twins. The pregnant wife also has certain food taboos. She must not eat; porcupine, young wasps, thrush, and quail. She will also not eat any 'animal rejects' (e. caw), since that could influence her in such a way that she would have 'human rejects' (tsaw caw). Also, when an 'animal is butchered, if it is found to have young in it, she will not eat that, either.

As far as I can tell, these taboos are not religious. They are taboos that have grown up among the women of the tribe, and are handed down from generation to generation. With some women, during the entire period that they are capable of having children, they refrain from any of the above foods. During pregnancy, many women get a craving to eat 'white clay' (mi tsa a nah). Some of them eat large quantities of this during pregnancy. The amount is evidently dependent on their craving for it.

Responsibilities of husband.

During his wife's pregnancy, the Akha man is under certain strict taboos. He must not take part in any of the village ceremonies or feasts during the time his wife is pregnant. When the offering is made to the 'lords and rulers of land and water', he will not even go. The same is true when the village gate is renewed once each year. He will not announce that this is the reason; for not going, however. If a villager should ask him why he is not participating, he will simply say, "If the village elders take care of it, that will, be sufficient", and his friend then knows that he must ask no more.

The husband will also not climb trees while his wife is pregnant. If he did, when the child was born, it would shake and be frightened easily. Also, the child would fall easily when picked up. When someone dies in the village, he will not help in the making or transportation of the coffin. Nor will he help carry the corpse to the grave. He will also be careful not to kill any snakes during this period. Looking at the moon is also taboo. Also, the husband must not go where someone is having 'spirit incantation' (neh toe-eu). After his wife has been pregnant for five months, the husband will neither cut or shave his hair until after the child is born. If he did so, this could produce 'human rejects'. There is also some fear that his wife may abort if he strikes her while she is pregnant, so for the most part the husband will refrain from this.

Responsibility of others.

A general taboo that everyone must observe with a pregnant woman is that they must not point their finger at her. If a person who is 'spiritually potent' should point his finger at her this can cause the unborn child to abort or be stillborn. If a pregnant woman does abort or has a stillbirth, and if there is pretty good proof that someone pointed his or her finger at her while she was pregnant, that person can be fined. The standard fine for such an offence is ten ga' (K 25.00 or K 22. 50, about. 5.00).

Abortion.

When there is an abortion early in the pregnancy, the woman usually disposes of it secretly, if she can. If the child has developed enough so that she cannot handle it alone, she will have her husband dispose of it as best he can. They are ashamed of abortion, and feel it is due to some 'mistake' they have made. When an abortion takes place, the village does not observe 'ceremonial abstinence' (laheu) since the child was not named.

Miscarriage

If the woman has a miscarriage (za yoe dzeh-eu, or bu si,, si—eu, the latter being more polite), Akhas have a ceremony to keep her 'soul from running away'. (La' ba ba eu). Chicken meat is used for this. Strings are tied to her wrist while a person says, "May your life be long, your generation extended" (K'aw ta ba la ta mui)

CHILDBIRTH

When a child is born in an Akha village, and it is a 'good' birth (not a 'human reject'), there is a general feeling of release of tension. The women show a good deal of emotion over it, but for the most part the men do not say much. If they hear that a girl has been born, then they will say of the family, "They'll have water to drink now" (I' cu c'aw—i'—eu ya day' nga) When a boy is born they will, say of the family, "They'll have game to eat now" (Sha, beum seh-eu ya dza,, nga' .)

A woman's first delivery is somewhat more important than the next ones. If the first child dies, there are certain precautions she must take to see that the others don't die. For example, until that month (ba la) is finished, she must not comb her hair, spin thread, sew or weave cloth, if her first—born dies. Also, she must be extra careful about what she eats. Some Akha women (K-25 and friends) told me that they cannot eat curries . during this time, "unless we eat them with others".

Before the delivery, the pregnant woman must prepare the bamboo knife with which to cut the placenta (da' hi'), and a string to tie the cord. She will carry these around with her everywhere she goes when she feels that the time is getting near. Also, if possible, she will try to carry a mat with her if she goes out to the fields then, since she likes to have her child born onto a mat rather than right on the ground.

The women prefer to have their children born at home, but since they are told that they must carry heavy burdens and go to the fields up to the full term, in order to have a normal birth, they often have their children in the field, or the field hut, or somewhere in the jungle area outside of their village gate. When the child is born in these locations, it does not seem to bother the Akhas, but they say that the child and afterbirth must be taken back to the village as soon as possible, and all of the customs done in the village. K-25 said that if the child is born in the field or jungle, the mother must take off her jacket, bundle the child in it, and carry the child back home that way. Many Akhas have told me that when the child is born at home, they must have the actual delivery in the little house built for the couple near the father's main house. This is so that if 'human rejects' (tsaw' caw) are born, the main house will not have to be destroyed, but just the little hut nearby. However, some Akhas (including K-22) feel that even if the birth is in the small house, if twins are born the large house will have to be destroyed too, since it is the custodian of the ancestor altar.

If a son and his pregnant wife are living with the mother, the father having passed away, the birth must take place on the covered porch just outside the men's side of the house, "since the mother is the head of the house then". When a child is born, usually just a few old ladies are present. Under no circumstances must any woman who is married and has not had children be there. Also, those who are still capable of having children stay away. Some say (K—2) that small children can be present, but others (especially K—22) say that they chase all of the children out.

There is some difference of opinion concerning whether the husband should be present or not. Many feel very strongly that he should be nearby, but never actually present when the child is born (K-15). I believe that in most cases when the birth seems imminent the old ladies in charge send the husband out onto the porch where he waits until he hears the baby cry. Then he comes right back in and helps in various ways. Some believe that 'if the husband is not embarrassed by the birth, it is all right for him to stay. Others say that if he actually witnessed the birth, he might die from it.

One of the old women present is more or less considered to be in charge. It is usually the oldest woman, unless one of them is the husband's mother, and then she is given the position of honor. In the case of K-22, however, since she was living in her own village, her mother was present too. Since her mother was older than her mother-in-law, her own mother took charge of the proceedings. This is unusual, I believe. Some have told me that under no circumstances should the mother of the woman giving birth be present.

They believe that if the mother in labor will drink plenty of hot water, and stay near the fire, it will help the baby to be born easily. "If the inside of the mother's body is cold, it is hard for the child to be born". For the most part, I do not believe they massage to help with the birth of the child, although they do massage to help the afterbirth come out if it is too long in coming. Others, however, say that they have helped to massage - although they always stress that it must be done very lightly. Some women squat (hunker down) to give birth, with at least one old woman helping to support her from behind. They do not hold onto anything. But others (including K-22) kneel for the birth. When the child is actually born, it just drops down onto the mat, or boards, or whatever is under her (K-25). Then the helper quickly cleans out the child's mouth with her finger. P-2 says that sometimes the father does this.

According to rigid Akha custom, no one must pick up the child until it has cried three times. K—2 feels that it is up to the woman in charge of the birth, however. One thing is certain. They do not consider the child to be alive (or truly ‘born deh le-eu) until it has cried three times. They say that when it cries three times like that it is asking for three things; blessing (gui lah) a soul (sam la), and a lifespan (zi’). These things are given by ‘God’, and the way in which he gives them determines the child’s whole future.

After the baby has cried three times, the woman in charge quickly gives it a name. This may or may not be the ‘official’ name of the child later on, but it is a precaution against the child being named by the spirits, who would then claim it for their own. Another reason that the child is named right away is that if there should be another child born in the same village after that one was born, but before it was named, then the first baby to be born would be sure to die.

If after the child is born it does not breathe and cry right away, they often call the father in. He stands near the child and gently fans it with the bottom of his pants. They say that this often helps the baby to start breathing and crying. Also, the parents will pray something like this; “Don’t make it hard for us, ancestors (a, poe, a, pi) don’t make it hard for us, creator of children (za,, m za sah a, ma), don’t make it hard for us, giver of children (za, bi za, jah a ma).

Many Akhas believe that an infant born after seven months will be ‘hard, tough’ (yaw g’ah’), and will live. However, a child that is eight months along when born will be ‘soft’ (yaw nab) and often dies. When the child finally cries, and has been named, then the woman in charge quickly ties the string that the mother prepared for this around the cord, and cuts it with the ‘bamboo knife’ (da’ hi). After that, she washes the baby. They believe that if the father ate a lot of caladium and yarn during her pregnancy, there will be a lot of cheese-like stuff on the child. They wipe it off with old rags (K—22) or wisps of Cotton (x-25).

For the bath, the woman who is helping sits down and takes the child on her lap. She has a basin of warm water in front of her. She dips the cotton (or rags) into the water and washes the child. But when she washes behind the ears, and under the armpits, she will take some water into her mouth, and then spit it out on these places. When she is finished washing the baby, she will wrap it up in a long cloth (buy 10).

The next important event is the delivery of the placenta. They sometimes help it along with massaging, and also by giving medicine to drink, which is compounded by elder who know what to mix. If that does not work, they call in a spirit priest. He will have them kill a chicken or pig, after which he will repeat spirit incantations.

When the placenta is delivered, the father must take it and the ‘bamboo knife’ (da hi) used to cut the cord, and bury them under the house, right below where the ancestor shrine is. Later on, when the cord falls off (ca tah ga ka—eu), he will bury that with the placenta too if he sees it. If it is lost, that is perfectly all right. To remove the placenta, the father puts it in the section of bamboo they use to put ashes in from their fireplace (k’a leh da’ pa). He digs a shallow hole, and puts the placenta in it. Then he puts boards over the hole so that animals cannot get to it. The father must ‘water’ the placenta with hot water once or twice every day, to keep ants and various bugs from eating the placenta. Some Akhas say that when the mother can get up and around, she takes over the watering of the placenta. Others, including K—25 and her friends, say that except for the burying of the placenta, the mother has to do all the watering. But I believe it depends on the husband. K-25’s husband is a lazy opium smoker. P-1, on the other hand, watered the placentas when every one of his children was born.

They water the placenta daily with hot water until it disintegrates, which some Akhas consider to be around one month, but others say is just a few days. The term for placenta literally means 'friend living with child' (za. aw caw). Akhas believe that if it is taken care of properly, the child will be healthy. But if they do not 'water' it properly and bugs and insects get to it, then the baby will have stomach trouble and vomit. I asked K-22 if she had ever seen babies get sick because the placenta was not taken care of, and she replied that she had never seen it happen. But she went on to say that she had never known anyone who did not take care of the placenta properly there is another way some have of getting rid of the placenta. They push a stick onto the ground, at an angle, below the ancestor shrine. Then they hang up a little bamboo container with the placenta in it on that stick. They water it every day for 10 days with hot water. But this is not the usual way of caring for it. There is a certain type of 'medicine' (ja g'a) that the women prepare to rub on the infant's navel. They take some shoots from a certain type of bush (leh o), and put them by the fire until they are thoroughly dried. Then they rub them into powder with their fingers. They rub this powder on the navel every day until it heals.

When the father comes back from burying the placenta he boils two eggs. He then breaks one open and 'feeds' the infant. To do this, he simply takes a very little bit of the egg and touches it to the infant's lips. Then he gives the other to the mother to eat. When she eats that egg they believe that it helps the milk to start flowing so that she can nurse the infant. When the infant is fed the egg, he really becomes a person. Anyone can finish eating the egg after a tiny portion has been touched to his lips. They believe that 'God' gave the custom of the two eggs to their ancestors.

If the husband happens not to be home when the infant is born, he will return as soon as he has news of the birth. If a boy was born, he will bring a tiny crossbow and present it to him. If a girl was born, he will bring a little cotton spindle (ya ah") and give it to her. This seems to be a way of showing the child he is sorry he was gone when the child was born.

MIDWIFE.

After the child has been born, the midwife' (a_pi which means either old woman or grandmother) who was in charge, is given a present. If it was a boy that was born, the parents give her a bodice (la. sha). If it was a girl, they give her the cloth part of a woman's head dress (u, tsah). The child that was brought into the world by the midwife has responsibilities to her later on in life. For example, if after the child has grown up the midwife who delivered him becomes sick, he must go with either a chicken or pig, and perform a ritual ceremony (jeh dzm ci., neh—eu). For it he first kills the animal he brought, then cooks the meat, and fixes the following 'dishes': 'holy rice', meat, three rice balls (ja leh), broken rice (ceh loe), an egg, a cup of Liquor, and a cup of tea.

These are fixed on a 'rice table' (hay, jeh). Then the one who was delivered by the midwife feeds her a little from each of these dishes, and the midwife accepts it as she would an ancestor offering. The cups with the liquid in them are handed to her with both hands, and she holds them with both hands as she sips a little.

When that is finished, others also feed her some egg and rice balls which they have brought, and then all tie strings on her wrist (las tui pam-eu). While tying the strings they say something like this, "Don't die quickly, grandmother (Yaw aw,-eh ta., shiv, a., pi,o) They also tell her to go on living a long time, and give her a general blessing. They then give her some money (usually small sums), and after that, "she will get well".

DIFFICULT AND UNUSUAL BIRTHS.

When there is a difficult birth, the Akhas believe that a bad spirit is holding the baby back. The reason the spirit does that is that it is hungry for something. So if the Akhas will cook the kind of food, usually meat that the spirit wants to eat and feed it, then the baby will come. In order to determine which spirit it is and what food that spirit wants to eat, some shaman (nyi pa) or elder will 'divine' (ceh Si,, tsi—eu). K-29 has done this many times.

When they divine, they usually start by asking. "Is it an 'outside spirit' (nyi neh) that is offended? If it is then they ask if it is the husband or wife, mother or father, one of the children. etc., who has wronged the spirit. And then they ask what mistake was made. If it was not the 'outside spirits', then they ask if it was the 'inside' spirit' (k'oe neh.). If either the husband or wife has committed adultery, it will be an offence against this spirit, and that is often the cause of long labors, they feel. Or it may be that the husband and wife have not carried out ceremonial abstinence properly. Or perhaps they made a mistake in an ancestor offering. For example, they may not have put the right number of pieces of meat into the meat dish. Or they might have broken some custom. The example K-29 gave here was of a dog getting some of the sacred food for the ancestors (a poe law dza). He said that if a dog came in and licked the board that had been used to cut up the meat for the above, they could have to start all, over again. It may be that this couple was guilty of this infraction of the religious custom (zah leh i—eu), and therefore the 'inside spirits were keeping the child from being born.

Sometimes they divine for an hour or so. It usually averages around half an hour, however. There have been some times when "everything went just right", and they finished in just five or ten minutes. When they are through, they know who wronged what spirit and how ('the wrong can't be hidden from the spirits'), and what animal they must sacrifice to that spirit.

If it is a chicken that is to be offered to the spirit, the husband must catch one of his chickens. Or someone in his household must do it if he is not free. But when they 'ceremonially sprinkle' (kui la sheh-eu) and kill the chicken it must be some non-relative that does it. It must also be a non—relative that cooks it, "since the child is not born yet". When the child is born, then the father is the one who must kill and cook a chicken.

If it is an 'outside spirit' that has been offended, they will kill and cook the chicken outside the village gate. If it was an 'inside spirit' they will kill and cook it under the house, but the actual offering of the chicken will be before the ancestor shrine.

When the chicken has been cooked, an elder will take three pinches of meat and drop them, one at a time, in front of the ancestor shrine, while saying something like this; "Don't eat and drink with us any more. Go back to your own place. Each person must stay in his own dwelling. We offer this all to you. Naigo back" (Ta pa caw dza ta pa caw daw Naw ha-eu,, jaw paw g'o le-aw. Yaw g'a jaw ga yaw g'a jaw—i'—aw Naw a h maw shaw le ma de. G'o. le—aw) The elder who drops the meat and repeats the formula must be the same one who did the divining. When they make this offering outside the village gate (or as they put it, the 'edge). of the fields') they just drop it on the ground.

After the spirit has eaten the meat that it wanted then the child should be born. If it is still not born, however, they will divine again, since it is quite evident that the task is not finished. Either there are other spirits offended too, or the one offended spirit has not gotten everything it wants to eat as yet. There is a simple thing that the old woman (a pi,) in charge of the birth can perform in order to help the man in labor. She can take off her jacket, put it on the woman in labor (just lay it on top of her) and say, "I had a short labor, now you have a short labor too. Let the child be born quickly. Sh. says this even though it may be a lie.

If the child is still not born, word will be sent to the village priest (dzoe ma). The husband will not go to call him and tell him of the difficulty, however, since if the husband were to tell any 'powerful' person, such as the village priest, spirit priest, or blacksmith of the difficult birth, it could cause the child trouble later on. So one of the old women helping the woman in labor will go tell the village priest that the child won't come. The village priest must not go himself (mae le k'ma), not at first anyway. He will send instructions as to what to do. He may send word to knock off the crossbeams at the end of the roof (ba" k'a.). If they try that (usually the husband is the one to climb up and do it), and the child is still not born, the village priest say tell them to take apart their paddy pounder. If the if the child still is not born, the village priest will probably concoct 'medicine' for the mother to drink, and send it to her.

Different village priests have their own favorite 'medicines' to give to drink. A baw A euv (K-Vs father) heats a piece of 'lightning bolt' (tso) and then dips it into a cup of water. When the water is given to the woman having a difficult labor, "she has the child at once". He has had success with this many times, he says. "It is very potent."

K—28 puts just a little old cloth ("it can be just a few threads") from his pants, and from his jacket, into water, along with a tiny bit from the placenta of a recently born child. If they do not have that, they can use a bit of the cord that fell off. Or. they can scrape off a little bit of the strip of bamboo that they hung a placenta up with — if that was their means of disposal of the placenta. He gives this to women having a difficult labor, and "it works every time". It should be noted that village priests and others who know about Akha medicine certainly do not lack confidence in their remedies. K-29, who is not a village priest, but who understands about Akha medicine, told me his favorite 'medicine' for this. Some dried lotus blossom, some mercury (a very small amount"), and just a little 'dah la, u'. This is a little round thing, which is made by wrapping a little of the skin of an animal called 'dah la,,,' around some of the minced meat and blood from the same animal. I don't know what the animal is, but they say it lives in China, and is about the size of a dog. The odour is very fragrant. it is expensive to buy.

With the above mentioned items, he also adds some special water (caw dali ui za'). To get *this* water, he does the following. He takes a basin of water outside of the house, and onto the uncovered porch (gui ga). He then throws the water in the basin up onto the roof and then slowly walks back into the house right under the spot where the water is running back down, but this time with the empty basin held by both hands behind his back. He takes the water that he catches that way and goes to the wooden rice steamer (haw sa, bah). He carefully pours the water he has caught from the roof over one side of the inside of the steamer. He catches that and pours it again, catches it and pours it the third time. Then he puts the water from that, plus a few very small splinters from the steamer where this water touched it, into the mixture of things mentioned above.

He said that usually he gave this 'medicine' to the woman who was having a protracted labor, although "if the woman in charge knew how to do it, she could do it too". What he did was this; before giving her the medicine to drink, he pulled out three of her chairs. Then he patted her head three times, and then rubbed down her body, starting with the head, three times. He then gave her the 'medicine' to drink. K—29 says that this medicine has been successful in delivering at least six or seven babies.

If the medicines do not work, the village priest may go to the village gate. There are various things that different men do there. K—28 prays to the two figures outside the gate, then scrapes a very little bit of the wood from each figure and puts it in water for the woman having the difficult labor to drink. Men in the Loimwe area prefer taking a cup with just a little water in it. They stand right in the middle of the village gate, and while holding the cup of water up and out in front pray like this, oh, sun and moon, help us now. Oh 'God', we beg you to allow this person to be born.

Then he sends the water to the woman to drink. Some of them may have just a little of it rubbed on her body as well. They say that if this doesn't bring the child, then "it is bound to die".

There are other ways of repeating spirit incantations that they use with just plain water, as well as with various mixtures of medicine. Some village priests I have heard of pour a little water over each figure before the village gate, and then catch it before it reaches the ground. This is considered quite potent medicine. I have heard of the village priest lifting the most recently placed cross bar off of the village gate. However, I have not met anyone who has either done this or seen it done. The Akhas often say, though, that they have heard of others doing this.

There is not too much that a husband can do, except to catch the animals for sacrifice, or carry out the orders of the village priest. There is one thing, however, that some men do at this time. They undo their braided cue of hair. In an exceptionally difficult delivery, when all other remedies have failed, the village priest will go to the house of the woman having the difficult delivery. When he goes he will take his right arm out of the sleeve of his jacket, and just drape that part of the jacket over his right shoulder. He will leave his left arm in. Since the village priest is the only one who can wear his jacket this way (peh k'ah peh lo b-eu), and since this is the only time he does it, Others must not do it, and he must not do it on any other occasion. When he gets there he may take off his jacket and lay it on the woman in labor, in the general area where the unborn child is, and say something like this to the unborn child, "You are acting like a rock. Come and be born. Here is my coat. It is not right to wear a village priest's coat, but now you wear this." They feel that the child "will surely be born" if this is done. K-28 had not done this himself, but both he and K-29 have seen it done when other remedies have failed.

Several have agreed that if this is done, the child will come out of the mother, either dead or alive. K-29 told of the following, which he saw once, "and it was successful". A village priest went to the house with his right arm out of the sleeve, put his jacket on the woman in labor, then he himself went up and knocked off the cross—beams on the end of the house (ba k'a). After he came back down he put his jacket back on. Then he stepped outside the door, and blew three times on a jew's-harp, and three times on a flute (coi lot), and then went home. K-28 had never heard of doing all this. he felt it was not all necessary.

If the child is born as a result of a man mixing medicine, then when the child is one month old, the mother must go to that person and 'worship' (u du tah,—eu) him. She will give him five ga' (K 11.25). which is the cost of knowing the medicine' (jam g'a si poe). She will also tie a string around his wrist, which is considered the actual 'worship' part. She will also give him a chicken, which he will cook and feed to the mother and his own family.

When the birth is a premature birth, usually they will not name the child yet. If they do not name it and it dies, as many premature babies do, then it is 'easy' on the villagers, since they do not need to observe ceremonial abstinence. Many of them will wait until they feel the 'full time' for the baby has come, and then name it. Others, however, say that if it is healthy, even if it is premature, they name it right away.

When there is a stillbirth, the child is not named. Therefore it is not considered to be a 'person', and there is no ceremonial abstinence in the village. There is also a very simple procedure for burying the body (see under burial). If the couple has a lot of stillborn babies, or infants that die shortly after they are born, they will go to the elders and ask what to do. Often the elders will suggest that they kill a pig instead of a chicken when the next child is born. K-2's wife's relatives did this, and after 9 stillbirths, the couple got a fine girl, and after that a fine boy.

When the baby being born is a breech presentation, they are afraid that there may be a 'terrible tragedy' (u, ca,) caused by the spirits. They 5180 say that the spirits of one's 'father's sister' (a,, k'o,,) are mad at the couple for something, so they are causing this (a,, k'o. k'o,. tsoe,,). K-29 has been able to help lots of women who ha a breech presentation. They have been mostly Akha, but he also helped one Lahu woman who live d near Teung Ping. He gave the medicine described above. It must have mercury in it for this", ho kept insisting. He also said that if medicine did not work, they could 'divine'.

Akhas believe that birthmarks are a 'good' sign. They differentiate between the red kind (teh,, new. or, doe,, ne'). and the black (teh,, na, or, doe,, na). Whichever kind it is they say it is the place where 'God' slapped them as he said, Stay well, and don't come back." They feel that this means that 'God' gave them a long life.

There is another type of birthmark which they also feel is good. It is something on the ear lobe as if there were a hole in it. although it is not a hole. If a person is born with this, it means that 'God' has made him so that he will be able to understand things.

When K-29 told me that his daughter who died had a big birthmark on her chest, as well as this type of 'hole' on her ear (na,, tah tah—eu), I asked him why he felt she died when she had the 'sign' of long life. He said, 'But she died from a 'werewolf' (law pya)", and I was not home at the tune to drive it out. Any 'human reject' (tsaw caw) birth in an Akha village is considered the greatest tragedy that can befall the village as a whole and especially the household where it occurs. By 'human reject' Akhas refer to any abnormal birth.

They probably fear twins (called 'tsaw peh' in an angry sort of way) the most. But also those who are born with an extra thumb, finger or those who are born without the proper appendages. are also considered 'human rejects'. Those with harelips, or with any other malformed portion of the body are also relegated to this group. In the following I will describe what happens when twins are born, but it should be kept in mind that virtually the same procedure is carried out for any 'human reject' birth.

The moment twins are born, they must be suffocated. Usually it is the father who does this. He uses a mixture of paddy husks and ashes into the nostrils and mouths of his children. The father, rather than feeling sorry to have to do Lhia, is terribly angry at the. curse which caused this horrible tragedy to befall his house. He hates the sight of the twins, and is anxious to get rid of them as quickly as he can The village priest must also be notified at once. When he learns of the tragedy, he will 'make a proclamation (gun ga—eu) from his porch, so that the whole village will know what happened. and take the proper precautions, since the whole village is especially vulnerable to the designs of the spirits. There is no set formula that he will use, but generally it will be something like this "Everyone. come back and stay at home. We're going to have to have ceremonial abstinence. There has been an abnormal birth. The great power has sent a terrible tragedy on these two. A terrible tragedy has fallen on our village." (Yaw,, g'a, na lu, i kah g'o,. - yu la"—aw,, Nab lab ya lah nga'. Tsaw' caw caw-i nga,, U,, yeh' u,, tsa', yeh' ma sa' ma teu nyi,, g'a-ah' u, Ca. ka le—eu,, nga. Yaw, ha pu shaw deh-ah u,. ca ka le—eu,, nsa.) Since they have the custom of 'proclaiming' to the villagers when there is an abnormal birth. they do not do it for a normal birth. The word just gets around gradually then, "There is a baby in so-and- • so's house".

The village priest next selects one or two elders who know the Akha customs well, to accompany the couple, and they go out into the jungle, to the most remote spot they can possibly find. As the parents of the twins leave the village, no one (especially those who can still have children) will look at them, for fear that even looking will cause them to have twins too.

Actually, except for a few elders out gathering some plants to hang around the village (called meh", and related to the ginger plant), and a couple sent to call a spirit priest, all of the villagers stay in their houses and are perfectly quiet. They are thoroughly frightened. For three days they must observe 'ceremonial abstinence' (lah-eu). This means that they cannot go to their fields during that time. On the first day they cannot even carry water. On the second and third days, however, they can carry water for cooking and drinking purposes. Those elders who go call the spirit priest will get the most expert one they can find. There is a great deal of 'spirit incantation' (to"-eu) that he must repeat, as well as many animals that he must sacrifice. Some say that a minimum of 9 pigs, 9 chickens, and 9 dogs must be sacrificed. I heard from another (K—2) that he has seen 9 pigs, and 9 dogs sacrificed, without any chickens.

The general ceremonies that the spirit priest must perform at this time are 'purification' (m shaw-eu) ceremonies. Until all of these customs are finished, the couple must not return to the village. If the customs are not carried out properly by the spirit priest, then the Akhas believe that terrible things will happen. Many villagers will die. Tigers will come right into the village and take livestock.

As to the payment of the spirit priest for his service. at this time, they differ from village to village. One item that seems to be quite uniform is that the couple must give him their silver bracelets. Also, he gets hi. pick of things from the house where the twins were born before it is torn down and burned up. But not all, do this. If the couple is living with the father still, the spirit priest does not take any of those things, since the father still owns them. But the house still must be destroyed, after they have moved those things out. Some say that the village priest can take things out of the house before it is destroyed - that is, when the couple is no longer living with the father. The one thing the couple retains is the paddy house, with the paddy that is in it. But they lose everything else.

It can be seen from this that the couple is pretty much stripped of any wealth they might have had, and when they do come back to the village, they start with practically nothing - or more likely, with a debt, since their relatives expect them to gradually pay them back for the expenses of the sacrifices, ceremonies. etc. It was to repay this debt that Thra Po Tun (a Karen evangelist) gave money to relatives in order for them to release three orphans of a couple that had had twins. If the husband's father is still alive, and the couple was living with him at the time of the 'tragedy'. they are much better off. The father will give them back the things that he could rescue from the house and livestock.

After the couple has left the village, the elders quickly tie up long runners from the 'magic vine' (meh) all around the village. This is to keep spirits from coming back into the village. They will leave this up until it rots away or breaks down on its own. As to the burial of the twins (or other human rejects) in the jungle. it must be the remotest spot the parents and accompanying elders can possibly find. A hole is dug and the bodies thrown in. There is no coffin. They are just buried in old rags, since no one wants to touch their bodies. After they fill the dirt back in over their bodies, they cut down a wild banana tree (nga ne), and drop the end of it on the grave three times. This is to keep the ones who have died a 'terrible death' (.ha) from calling out later, since all 'human rejects' must be killed at once, and thus their death is considered a 'terrible' (sha) death. Since it happened in the house rather than in the jungle, though, the names of the parents of the 'human rejects' are not dropped from the genealogy.

When twins are born the mother must take off her head dress (u, co.?) and not wear it for it is a terrible disgrace. The father must not wear a turban for a whole year. Actually, they are not supposed to wear any clothing at all while they are in the jungle. According to the 'old way' of doing it, they would sew large leaves together and just wear those during their period of stay in the jungle.

But they usually wear old rags. when they later return to the village, they must discard these in the jungle. When twins are born in an Akha village, naturally the small children wonder what all the excitement is about. But the parents don't want to tell them 'twins were born', so they will often say, "Baby monkeys were born" (A myo. myo. za, deh, ic-eu, nga) If the child born had an extra thumb they might say, "Baby bamboo gophers were born" (Ho pi, za, deh ic-eu, nga.) As the children grow up they learn they are not to ask any more questions when they hear this. When there has been the birth of twins in an Akha village, the news travels fast to the Akha villages in the area. When they hear of it they too are frightened, and many of them, especially the women, will observe ceremonial abstinence for at least one day. Also, no one will go visit the village where it happened for at least one month, and then only after a special ceremony has been observed (see below).

After the couple has buried the twins, they begin. with the elders who accompany them, to build a little temporary shelter (seh g'aw) in which to spend the night. They intertwine plenty of magic vine' (meh'i into it. After one of the elders has repeated spirit incantations at the spot, they can sleep there. The very next morning, quite early, the village priest will take four or five elders and go down to the water source to 're-purify' it. For this they must offer a rooster, a hen, a dog, and a pig. The dog and pig must be of opposite sex. What they do then is very similar to the purification of the water source once a year. except this time they do not combine the purification of the rice seed with it. Also, the spirit priest drops the meat and rice outside of the water spout (tsaw bi) for this. The village priest receives 30 pyas (ti peu) from the village for this. Meanwhile, the couple in the jungle, with the two elders helping them, move their camp that day, to a place somewhat closer to the village. Again they erect a shelter (seh g'aw), intertwining 'magic vine' into it. Again one of the elders must repeat spirit incantations before they can sleep there. On the third night they do the same thing, once more moving a bit closer back to the village.

As to the amount of time they must stay in the jungle, this differs from village to village. It may have been originally that they were banned for a whole year - but no village I know of follows this now. One group of villagers told me that the couple could come back to the village in three days if all of the 'purification' (m shaw'-eu) ceremonies were completed. They did this in upper Jaw seu village when twins were born.

Others said that the very minimum would be nine days, since the couple had to camp in nine different places before they could come back, so as to throw the spirits off their trail. I have heard others say that one cycle of days (13) must elapse. Probably it is up to the spirit priest and village priest to decide. It may be different lengths of time according to the circumstances. For example, it might depend on how soon the spirit priest could come, how quickly they could get the sacrifices lined up. etc. In Nagui village they said they came back in seven days when twins were born. Even after the couple comes back to the village, they still have rigid restrictions for one year. One restriction is that they must not have intercourse. If they break this ban the village priest will *fine* them heavily. Public sentiment will also be very strong against them.

Of course they will not be 'found out' unless the woman becomes pregnant again. Also during that year they are not allowed to visit in anyone's home, and no one must visit in their home. Nor must they enter anyone else's village. They do go to bazaar town, as Kengtung. When I asked K-2 about this he said, "Oh. the Shans don't know any better". The couple must not even speak to anyone for this twelve month period, with the exception of the one or two elders that have been selected to aid them in carrying out the customs. And when they speak to the elders, it must be about 'business' matters, such as what sacrifices need to be made, etc. If they should happen to meet another Akha walking along a path, the other Akhas would immediately turn his or her head away from them and spit - which is very impolite in normal circumstances.

During that first year, and in some cases for the rest of their lives, the couple who had twins must live at the very lower edge of the village. I have heard of villages where they had to actually live outside the village. The reason for them having to live at the bottom of the village is that no one would think of living in a place where the refuse from a 'twin' house would wash down on him. The 'guilty couple' (as they are considered by the Akhas). must also get their water from some other source than that which the 'good' villagers use. Some say this is true up to just one year, but others say it is for Life.

As mentioned above, there is a ban on people from other villages visiting in the village that has had twins. This ban lasts for one month. When the month has elapsed, people can start visiting again, but the first person who visit the village must be given a pork curry feast. The pig is provided by the villagers. This pork feast (pu k'ah, peh.-eu) marks the 'opening' of the village. After it is done, others can visit in that village, and people from that village can visit other villages - except for the 'guilty couple'.

The fathers of twins are not encouraged to go hunting with the village men when they go hunting, although if there is a large enough group going. they sometimes allow one such father to join them. Also when they hold village ceremonies (as building the village gate. swinging on the village swing. etc.) the fathers of twins should not attend for at least one year. In actual practice this breaks down in some villages, however. Men who have had twins are 'taboo' (zah do.) to each other. If they want to speak to each other they can not do so directly, but must speak through a third person (a ka ka,-eu tsaW ha). Parents of twins are often called 'tah, pah. tsaw ha,'. In the next world they can climb no higher than 'tah, pah,'.

There have been some Akhas who claimed that the names of parents of twins are not included in a genealogy. since it is a 'terrible' (sha) death, but other disagree with this, since it was in the house that it happened. One thing they seem to agree on. though the fact that the naming of the children born after human rejects' has to be different. They must be named in accordance with the day of the week on which they were born, rather than the second part of the father's name being the first part of theirs. For example. saw boe (K-2) told me of a man named Shaw dzui. He had a son Dzui gaw. then a daughter Dzui Shui and then twins were born. They were not named, of course. After that another son was born. according to Akha custom his name should have started with 'Dzui'. But since he followed twins, he was named 'Lah peh', since he was born on 'rabbit' (lah,) day. There were no more children, but if there had been, they too would have to be named according to the day of the week on which they were born, as Sheh' beu, Lah shui, etc.

When a child is born with an extra finger or thumb, they consider that there are two classes. One is the class which has a bone present in the extra finger, and the other is just flesh. When a bone is present, the child is treated as a 'human reject'. When it is just flesh, however, some follow a ritual whereby they can "usually" get rid of the extra flesh, and make it a 'good' birth. This is what they do.

The child is put down in the place where the fire is ordinarily made to cook pig's food, although at this time there is no fire. Then he is covered over with winnowing trays, and the trays are held down by the stone they use to sharpen their machetes. Then the spirit priest comes first, and standing just inside the door, with his right foot extended forward a bit, he repeats spirit incantations. During this time the father is 'guarding' the place where the child is. If the spirit priest speaks to the spirits properly, the piece of extra flesh will disappear. If he is unsuccessful, then they will call, the blacksmith (called 'cia ma' ceremonially). He will come and repeat spirit incantations as the spirit priest did before him. If he does not know the words to say, someone will, have Lo help him.

If he is also unsuccessful (the father being the one to peep inside to check), then the last, and most important in the Akha hierarchy, will be the village priest. K-2 feels that surely it will disappear if these three repeat the spirit incantations. If after all of this the extra flesh is still there, though, they treat it as a 'human reject' and kill it.

It should be noted that this last custom is one which K-2 has never seen done, but he has 'heard' of people doing it.)C-28 and K-29 also had never seen it, but they said, "Yes, our fathers knew how to do this, but we don't." This may be significant when it comes to dating various events. When they say about a custom, "Our fathers did it", then it means that it has been a fairly recent custom, but has dropped out in the last generation or two, or is dropping out now. When they say, "Our grandfather. (a, baw) did it", then it means it dropped out longer ago — maybe three or four generations ago. When they say, "Our ancestors (a, poe, a, pi) did this but we don't, it means that it was either dropped a very long time ago - or that it was just a mythical custom.

POSTNATAL CARE

On the day of the birth, the husband prepares an egg for the mother to 'drink'. He takes a fresh egg, takes off a little of the top (at the point), and sets it near the fire. As it cooks some will bubble up and over. When it is about half cooked, he gives it to the mother, who drinks it so that she will start producing milk. K-28 referred to this as 'medicine' (ja g'a). If it looks like the child will live, they will 'kill the chicken' (ya seh,, seh-eu), and name the child. If the child is not in very good health and they think it might die, they will postpone this.

After the birth of the child, the mother will stay on a special 'bed' (za. nah,, a ma ja ci,) near the fire. The husband makes it of bamboo. It is just two or three inches above the sleeping floor. They put this by the fireplace for the first month after the birth of the child. If after one month they move this bed away from the fire and the child cries, then they must move it back. Or if they have moved it once, and only later the child starts crying, they must move it back near the fire. There are various activities and ceremonies for which the mother must get up. For one thing, she will have to water the placenta with hot water twice daily, although this is cut down to just once daily later on as it shrivels up.

The mother and child must sleep together by themselves on the bed for ten cycles of days after birth. Some refer to this as five months, but K-28 says that is stupid, it is only four months. As I figure it out it is probably 121 days. and is a very important period for the new mother. This matter of sleeping 'by themselves' on the bed is the polite way of saying that she and her husband must not have intercourse during that 10 cycle period. If they sleep together before the period is past, and the wife becomes pregnant again, the parents can be (should be according to K—28) heavily fined by the village priest.

Also, the brothers (a mah' a da) of the wife can fine her husband for 'forcing himself' on her before that period has elapsed, especially if she should become anaemic (do, la-eu). Of course, they cannot always know for sure whether or not they slept together during that period. But one thing they seem agreed upon is that if a child is born to the mother within a 12 month cycle of the other child, it is considered a twin. K—2 told of Pateh village moving up its new year's celebration slightly, because one couple had had a child just before last year and the wife was close to term near the time for the 1965 New year. So they moved it up to have it before she had her child so it would not be a twin. K-28 and 29 said they did the proper thing. They had both heard of this too.

Concerning the 'anaemia' (do la-eu) which they fear so, they believe it can develop during the 10 cycle period after birth, if the mother is not careful. They believe, for example, that if the woman sits on the same piece of split bamboo on the floor with a man, if her 'luck-blessing' (gui, lab) is 'not big', she will become anaemic and swell up. Or if she takes a pair of men's pants onto her lap during this 10 cycle period, if her 'soul is thin' (sa, la ba-eu), she may get anaemic. After the 10 cycle of days is past, these things are permissible.

The mother must also be careful of her diet during this period, which is called 'ba, geu nab)aw'. She must eat only rice, chicken, eggs, 'white' greens, pumpkin greens, rock salt, dog meat, a type of green (g'aw, ceh) they put in wounds to stop the bleeding, and a few other such 'mild' foods. She must not eat duck, beef, or pork that is cooked with fat in it. If she ate the fat it would give her loose bowels. Also, it would have to be meat from a castrated boar. But even so there are a fair number of Akha women who are afraid to eat any kind of pork during this period. The rice by the way, must be steamed in their wooden rice steamer (sam bah). If she were to eat beef or duck during this time, she would 'have an epileptic fit'. During this period she must wear only old clothes. She must not put on jewellery and try to look nice. "If she did that, 'God' could not bear the sight (ma, haw nah—a)." "

For the first cycle of days (1.3 days) after the birth of the baby, no one must sit on the mother's stool. The way they can tell it is her stool is by the presence of various leaves on it. The reason for these leaves is to 'overcome the vapour.' (sam g'a, le ni). Also, they say it 'heals up her end'. The leaves which they use are; rag weed, something called 'k'a hm deli tse, also something they call 'haw, sah, lah, ma', and a type of leaf they consider to be the best to get 'vapours out of' swellings, called 'sm si,'.

Many Akhas, as mentioned above, bury the placenta when the child is born. But there are also those who fix it up on the stake. For those who fix it up on the stake, they do not do it the first day after the birth. That night they leave it in a bamboo section (baw, law) near the infant. Very early the next morning the husband goes out and cuts a stake (ca k'eu) and drives it into the ground not too far from the house. It is tall enough so that the wife can 'water' the placenta which will be placed in a basket on top, but not so low that dogs and pigs can get to it. He then attaches a loosely woven carrying basket (k'a ka') to the top of the stake, and puts the bamboo section with the placenta in that. He does this as early as he can, since if another child is born in the village before this is up (ca' yui yui eu), the second child would be sure to die.

After the father has put up the stake, and hung the basket with the placenta in it (cam k'eu' tso_eu), the mother comes out to water the placenta and put ashes in it (catm k'eu g'aw ha,—i-eu). But what they do is different. First the method used in the Jaw seu, Pateh region. The mother of the infant first boils an egg. Then she gets some ashes out of the fireplace, and carries them ; out to the 'stake' (ca k'eu). She carries them in their bamboo 'ash—pan' (k'a. leh' da' pa). A young child goes along with her as she takes the ash-pan and boiled egg outside to the stake. The young child will carry the baby. If the baby is a boy, a girl must carry it. If the baby is a girl, a boy must carry it. When the mother gets to the stake, she puts the 'ash-pan' into the basket on top. Then she breaks the egg she boiled and puts the shells into the 'ash-pan', and leaves them there. She feeds some of the egg to the infant, along with some cooked sticky rice (haw, nyaw). This feeding' is merely to touch some of it to the baby's lips. Then she returns to the house with what is left of the egg (most of it), and the child who carried the infant out carries it back in. When the mother gets back into the house, she feeds some of the egg to the child who helped her first, then anyone else can eat the rest of the egg. The mother too can eat some if she wants to. I believe this is done when they bury the placenta in the ground. In the case of these villages, the basket is empty.

K-28 and 29 told how they do it in the northern area. The mother goes out alone. The child is left in the house. Also, she does not boil an egg - at that time. Furthermore, she has the 'ash-pan' in one hand, and a bamboo section with hot water in it in the other. The mother, when she gets to the stake, first of all pours the ashes on the placenta, and then the hot water. She says nothing while doing this.

She then returns to the house and boils an egg. She next carries the new born infant on her back (eu,-eu), and goes outside to the covered porch (gui' ga ceu), and breaks open the boiled egg on a clod of earth. The clod of earth was dug and put there by her husband for this purpose. They do not seem to know just why they have the clod of dirt there. It's just the 'old custom', they say. The mother first feeds a little of the egg to the child, and then she eats a little. Then she takes scissors and cuts the hair of the child three times from the temple area. If the infant is a boy, she will be especially careful not to cut any hair from the area where his top—knot will later be. After the first haircut (teeh kah' teh ka-eu), the mother returns and lies down.

On the day after the mother has done the above ceremony, the husband kills a hen. In the Loimwe area it is called 'purifying chicken' (ya shaw), but in the northern area (Loimwe) it is called 'purifying meat' (sha,. shaw seh—eu). The two of them also eat a little bamboo sprout (nga leh"), which is also considered to have a some kind of 'purifying' qualities. The family, including the mother, gathers around and eats this meal. But the mother, before she eats, will first touch some of the food to the infant's lips. There does not seem to be any special ceremony with this. But only after they have eaten this meal, which might be considered a meal of 'purification' for the mother, will the villagers come and visit in the home of the new mother. They feel there is something 'unclean' about that house until the 'purifying chicken' has been eaten.

K—2 illustrated the above by saying, "If a baby is born in A hue's house, and my son went to the house before they ate the 'purifying chicken', when my son came back home I would not let him reach his hand into the rice steamer (sa, bah,) to dip out rice.. Others have agreed with this. K-28 said that if the son would return and dip out the rice (under the circumstances) his household would 'eat a lot of rice'. That is, they would eat much more than their normal requirements.

On this day the father of the child has two more Important duties to perform. First of all he must rub some lacquer (beh naw, la, du, jah—eu) on the cap of the child. In Akha it literally means to 'make a bracelet of lacquer'. but it is not for the arm. He will roast a little of the lacquer by the fire to soften it up. When it is soft he will rub and roll it into an elongated piece, and then rub it into some of the strings on the top of the cap so that it will, stick there. This is so that spirits will not afflict the child. Some in the Loimwe area also rub some on the wrist-cord, but evidently they do not do this up north in the Loimwe area.

The other important duty the father has that day is to take three branches from a certain vine (leh, gu, leh, ni) and hang them at the men's door of the house, just above the door, and three branches just about the door on the woman's side of the house. He also ties up some netting from an old fishing net (za za ceh) over each door. These items are to keep 'vampires' (pie seu), and 'werewolves' (lam' pya) from coming into the house. The reason for the fish net is that evil things are afraid of the maze of strings. The vine is the kind they use when making arrows for their crossbows. It is what holds the end where they put in the bamboo 'feather' tightly held down, and is very strong. Three or four days after the birth of the child, the Mother will go outside the house and 'gather firewood' (Mi dza, k'eh dzaw" dzaw"—eu). Actually, it is just going through the motion. Her husband will have put out a stick about three to four feet long. She will go out, pick it up and cut it into three lengths. She will then put these into her basket (kla ka), and return to the house with them. When she gets back, she and husband boil an egg. After the wife has touched a little of it to the lips of the infant, she and her husband will eat the egg.

During this time the mother can get up when she likes to, and do little things around the house. She can also carry water, after the umbilical cord of the infant has sloughed off which is usually about five or six days after the birth. She must not go to other people's houses as yet, however.

During this period there is a very important ceremony where the mother takes the infant to the home of her husband's maternal uncle (a, g'ee), or someone of comparable relationship, such as her husband's older brother. If there is no such person in that village, then an older man will act as her 'a, g'oe' for that occasion. The timing of this visit seems to vary. Some say (P—I) that it should be just one cycle of days after the birth. Others (K—2) that it should be 7 days after the birth. Others (K-25) that it should be done on the first propitious day after the sloughing off of the umbilical cord. K-28 says that it must be done after the umbilical cord has sloughed off (cam tah, ga-eu), but - it does not have to be a propitious day, unless it is someone taking the place of the 'a, g'oe', then it must be done on his propitious day. This ceremony of taking the infant child to the home of his father's maternal uncle (nym da eu,, da le-eu) officially ends the time when the mother must not visit in other homes.

When the day for this visit comes, the mother takes the infant child with her, as well as other children if she wants to. But the husband must not go along. When she reaches the house of the 'a, g'oe' he will kill a chicken and fix a 'rice table', with the same items that were put on it for the naming ceremony. Actually, this is quite similar to the naming ceremony. 'Holy rice', with an egg, a dish with chicken, another dish with liquor, and another dish with tea are put on the 'rice table'. The dish with the chicken meat includes some meat from: the thigh (which is very important), some liver, and three small pieces from other parts of the chicken.

When the 'dishes' are prepared on the 'rice table', the 'a, g'oe' takes a string that he will tie around the wrist of the new born infant, and puts it in the dish with the egg and the 'holy rice'. He holds it there for just a moment, and then he passes it around the other dishes three times (K—25). K—2, P—I, and some others say that they actually dip it in each dish first. K-? says that in his area they don't really 'dip' it in any dish, but just pass it over and around the dishes three times.

Next the 'a, g'oe' takes that string and ties it to the right wrist of the infant. There are some who feel that for girls the string should be tied to the left and for boys to the right wrist. But others, such as K—25 and K-28 tie all strings to the right wrist. As he ties it to the child he says. Get big. Be healthy. Don't cry." Then after he finishes tying it, he must push the string up on the wrist just a little bit. They do not seem to know why they do this "but we always do it".

If the infant is sickly, the 'a g'oe' will, often say something like this "Get well. Don't let anything else happen. Let your food and drink be good (that is, have a good appetite). Don't let your soul run away. Pity your parents and come back to them." There does not seem to be any prescribed formula for this. They can say pretty much what they want, but the general theme for both the well and the sickly child is pretty much what I have written above.

After the 'a g'oe' has tied a string to the baby's wrist, he ties one to the mother's wrist as well. While tying it he says something like. "Be healthy. Don't let anything happen in the future. May you have a good appetite." Then he gives a gift of three silver ornaments (co." k'aw) if it is a girl, or a fifty pya piece if it is a boy. These the mother will later sew onto the child's outfit somewhere. Under no circumstances can these be used to buy anything.

After the husband's, maternal uncle (a g'oe) has done this, if there are other elders there, and almost always there will be, they come and tie strings while giving their blessings too. But they do not give any money or silver ornaments. Only the 'a g'oe', or brothers of the mother (a mah a da) do that. K—28 disagrees with others concerning giving an ornament or money that day.

He said that he gives nothing that day, but if during the night the child cries a great deal it means that he or she wants to 'beg' something from the 'a,, g'oe'. So the next day the mother must carry the child to the 'a,, g'oe'. and he will give the child a Chinese copper coin with a hole in the middle (gui, shui meh bya). Some who do not have that also give a fifty pya piece, for either a girl or boy, but they only give these things when the child 'begs' for them by crying.

After the 'a,, g'oe' has completed his part, the mother sits down at the 'rice table' and dips her hand into each dish and feeds her child. She can either put her hand to the child's lips each time, or she can collect it in the palm of her other hand, and then 'feed' it all at once. Then the mother eats some from each dish. After that everyone who is there gathers around and eats a feast (shi, ne ti-eu).

Sometime after they have eaten, when the infant's mother is ready to return to her home, one of the respected elder women (a,, pi,,), who is usually related to the mother in some way, will take off her jacket and hold it up near to the child, and say to him or her, "Hurry up and get big enough to wear this." Then she puts her jacket back on.

Sometimes the older woman may hold up a long cloth they use to carry infants (bui teh) and say. "Hurry up and get as big as this is." Then she usually gives the cloth to the mother. Akhas argue about this, however. Some say that "It is not proper (k'm-eu) to take the carrying cloth back at a time like this". Others (such as K—28) say they have never heard of using the carrying cloth, but only a jacket, and the woman always takes it back. From that time on, the mother can go visit in other people's houses with the infant. B for up to a month, she would have to rub just a little salt on the infant's lips each time they arrived at a house. Also, for up to a month, when she would be ready to leave the house, some older woman would have to hold up a jacket and say Get as big as this jacket. They would also have to give the infant an egg while saying, "Don't cry". (Note: the 'a, g'o.' did not give an egg.)

On the very next day, then, the mother must carry the infant on her back (eu,—eu), and pay a visit to a relative of her husband on the paternal side (a yui_ a, nyi). For this special visit (nynr da datm caw, eu, baw-i'—u) there is no tying of strings, nor a feast. The mother will, when it is time to go, give the child a little salt, by rubbing it on the infant's lips. The relatives will also give the child an egg while, saying. Don't cry". And an older woman will hold up her jacket and say. "Hurry and get as big as this".

Although the timing of the next major event differs slightly from area to area, most Akhas say that on the very next day the mother must 'carry the infant to the fields' (ya' ngeh eu,, do beh b.eh-i'-u). If she is not physically able to go all the way to a field, she at least must go outside the village gate. The Akhas say it is 'not proper' (ma, jaw k'm,-eu) for the child to just be kept in the village. Before starting out, the mother will wrap up a little cooked rice in a banana leaf (haw,, cu cu-eu). When she gets through the village gate she must 'feed' a little of the rice to the infant. Then she plucks a leaf, gives it to the infant and says, "Don't cry". Some say that she gives three leaves to the child if the child is a girl, and three small branches if it is a boy. They feel that this will keep the child's soul from running away (la ba ba'-eu). If she goes on to a field, when she crosses any kind of stream she must pick up a small stone and hand it to the infant. This too is supposed to keep the soul of the infant from running away. Some say that even if she does not go as far as a stream, she must pick up a rock on the outside of the village gate to have the infant carry. They also see to it that this stone is carried home.

They must not throw it away in the jungle. Some say that once they get it to their home, it does not matter whether it is lost or not. Others say, however, that it must be kept carefully. Just exactly one month after the birth of the baby, the mother gets to eat a dog curry meat - "to the full". That is, it is not ceremonial, but is meant to "bring back her strength".

From this time on there are fewer restrictions on the mother, although she must still be careful of certain things. One thing she must be careful to do is this. When she has been sleeping in the jungle with her infant (during the 10 cycle period), the next morning when she gets up she must stir up the spot on the ground with her foot or hand (foot and hand, says K-28) where the infant was sleeping. While doing this she says, "Get up boy (girl). Let's go home." If she does not do this, the infant's soul will remain there. Also some of them (Jaw seu wozen) take a little dirt from the spot back home.

When the 10 cycles of days (what they call either 4 or 5 months) is over then the restrictions and taboos are almost all relaxed. The mother can again have intercourse with her husband and no longer needs to sleep on the special 'bed'. Actually this alleviates the situation in the home, since as long as the 'bed' for the mother and infant was there no one could walk on it. If they did, the infant would be sure to get a stomach ache. The mother's diet restrictions are off, except that her first concern will still be that she eats things that will be 'good' for her infant.

ILLEGITIMACY

According to Akha custom, a girl must be married before a child is born. This means that they often have to marry lazy, good for nothings so that the child will have a father, and thus a genealogy. Often they have to give money, liquor, and pork to a man to marry the girl. If she is not married and a child is born, they believe that the men in the family will die for three generations. Even if she aborts, they consider this the same as a child being born. Actually they object to the idea of abortion very strongly. They do not appear to have any means of causing abortion, either. If an unwed mother should have a child that lived, she would have to kill it. "since that kind cannot live in an Akha village".

When a girl gets pregnant out of wedlock, the father will call in all of the bachelors and line them up. Then he tells the girl to grab the one who did it. The one she grabs must marry the girl, without any protest. If the girl has exchanged rings with a boy, or some other gift, that boy must marry her. If a widow becomes pregnant, the man who did it must marry her, even if he has a wife already. If a girl gets pregnant while she is living with her father, and there is no husband, they say that for "nine generations the males of the family will die" (mah dzah g'oe. gah,, li-m jew). They are extremely afraid of this.

If the girl has her child at home and dies, they must not bury her like other people. They take a hooked stick and use it to drag her out of the village. They do not touch her, and they do not make a coffin for her. Also, that village must move to some new site after this happens. An unwed pregnant girl is said to have very 'bad luck' (gui, lah, yaw doer). If the parents of the girl lie and say, "She is not pregnant", and a child is born early, then the family must see to killing and burying the infant. Also, the parents of the girl are fined a viss and two—tenths of old coins.

DEATH

THEORIES OF LIFE AND DEATH

Akhas have a saying that every person dies and lives nine times (shi deh g'oe, pol). That is, a person dies, becomes a spirit for some time, and then later is reborn, for a total of nine times. After that the person becomes a type of spirit (mi bym, mi' ceh, which is like the wind blowing. These reincarnations are not restricted to being an Akha in the next life. They can be Lahu, Chinese, etc. K—29 told of his grandfather, who when sick, had a Shan male shaman called. The Shan said, "Oh, this man used to be a Chinese ruler, for three lives. The next time he was born in Akha land, and is thus now an Akha." After that, the grandfather got well. One reason I include this example is because I believe there may be quite a bit of influence from Shan Buddhism concerning the matter of rebirth.

Akhas also have a proverb' (daw, da) which states that liars, murderers, and thieves will be born in the next generation as buffalos and cows. They have this legend concerning the granting of a life span (zi) by 'God. A man by the name of Deh leh deh, mah went to God to beg him to extend his life span. God told him, "Shed your skin" (G'aw g'aw,-i.) That is, when the man became old he was to shed his skin like a snake, and become young again. As this Akha man was returning home, he had to row his raft across a wide river, and while rowing it, he forgot what God had told him. So he went back, and God said the same thing. This time as he returned, he heard a giant tiger roar, and he was so frightened that he forgot again what God had said.

This time when he went back to God to ask him, God told him, "Let old people live to one hundred years, and then die. But let children live." That time on his return, a covey of quail suddenly flew up in front of him and scared him so he forgot again, and went back and asked what he was to do. That time on his return he met a big herd of cows, was frightened, and forgot again.

After five or six times of this, 'God' got angry and said, "Let those who die, die. Let those who are sick be sick" (K'a shiv deu, shi-aw. K'a na deu,, na-aw.) Akhas say that this is the reason that even babies die. "If he had not been so stupid and kept forgetting, babies would not die today." Akhas tend to be very much afraid of death. They do not want to talk about it. Even so, they tend to take it fatalisticly when it happens - although they want to keep it from happening to anyone in their family.

Akhas say that there is a 'stamp' inside everyone's forehead, placed there by 'God', which tells how long that person will live. However, if a person commits a 'big' sin, it cuts down the time of life. Some shamans can look at a person's palm and know how long he will live. Not all are able to do this, however. Even though they can look at this and know when a person will die, that person, by doing something 'terrible' can still cut that time down. As an example of something 'terrible', incest is the most common example they give.

A very common belief is that each person dies when his time has come". But there can be untimely deaths caused by spirits werewolves, vampires, or eating something poisonous. This last (dza d.za, dza leh,—eu) can also mean that a person ate a combination which was fatal. Akhas believe that when it comes time for a person to die, if he has 'sinned' a lot in life, then he will have a slow, painful death, with lots of thrashing about. and terrible groaning. A person who dies 'easily' has no sin. Several have told me gruesome stories of 'sinner dying.

If a child dies before he or she has gotten married, Akhas refer to that child as 'one called back by God' (yeh bi a g'o), or as 'called back by the childmaker' (za,. m za,. aah ku k'o.-eu). Actually, in their thinking, these are simply two manifestations of one being. Akhas believe that everyone living on earth has a tree in the 'spirit world' (mi *) Some trees are said to be pine trees, and some are said to be a type of palm (zaw).

If a person gets quite sick, he sometimes calls in a shaman to go to the 'spirit world' to see how his tree is doing. When calling the shaman, the sick person will have a friend go with an egg, six feet of Akha cloth, some liquor, and usually some money. Sometimes the shaman will go into a 'trance' (nyi shi—eu) to determine the exact state of that person's 'tree of life' more exactly. If that person's tree of life has not fallen down yet, when the shaman comes out of her trance, she will tell the family just what she saw. Often she will say, "Though the tree of life has not fallen down yet, it is not very strong, and must be strengthened." If it has already fallen down, they will not perform any ceremony to extend life, since the person is bound to die.

If in the night a parent dreams that his child dies, in the morning, when he wakes up, he will boil an egg and feed that child. Also, he will tie a string around the child's wrist. This will keep the soul from running away. If they dream night after night of dead parents or dead ancestors, then they must 'feed' them. They have five dishes for this; 'holy rice' (haw shaw), chicken, liquor, tea, and water. They feed the mother first, and then the father. While feeding them they ask that they will not meet up with anything bad, but only with good. K-29 has fed his parents three times - once a pig, twice chickens. He said that before his daughter died, he dreamed of his parents several times. "I should have fed them then. They were warning me."

It should be noted that the person may die even if the parents are 'fed'. The Akhas often say, "If the person's time on earth is finished, he will die, no matter what". This always absolves the shaman, or spirit priest, or whoever tried to help them extend the person's life. When I got the genealogy for La bah, a very poor man from Ya Ka, he left out the name of his grandfather, Zeh shaw,,. Later K-28 and K-29 told me that Zeh shaw,, was killed by a tiger exactly one cycle of days (1.3 days) after he had killed a sambar deer that was 'looking back as it died' (tseh ma nah g'o.). In spite of the fact that the elders warned him not to do so, Zen shaw, carried the meat back to the village. The Akhas felt it was as a result of this serious blunder that Zeh shaw,, was killed by the tiger.

The men went on to tell how that when the villagers found the body, they buried it right where it was, since he had died perhaps the very worst 'terrible' (sha) death. Then they lied to the villagers and told them that he had been burned to death. If the elders had told them that he had been killed by a tiger, most of the villagers would have been afraid to walk by there, but it was one of the main paths to the fields, so they told this lie. K-28 and K-29 told of others who have died for approximately the same reason. They seem quite amazed that people would think they could get away with such actions.

SUICIDE

Most of the Akhas I have talked with say, "I have never heard of an Akha committing suicide". In getting the genealogy of a very poor man from Ya ka. I found the first Akha I have heard of who committed suicide, although the versions I got differ a little. Already there seems to be a bit of fiction getting interwoven into the facts, such as his calling to his wife after he was dead etc. He married an A' jaw' woman, a distant relative of K-29. She was with child when she married him. She did not want to marry him, but her male relatives (a., mah a., da) forced her to so that the child would not be born without a father. She had a total of eight sons (I - don't know how many daughters). But she kept sleeping with other men.

Finally her husband got so mad at her for doing this that he jumped into the midst of a roaring fire when they were burning their fields. The men with him were sure it was not an accident. It was done to get 'revenge' on his unfaithful wife.

As to the Akha's attitude toward suicides from other tribes, they always seem dumbfounded that anyone would do such a horrible thing.

DYING

Akhas believe that they can tell if a person is going to die, either by asking a shaman to go into a trance, or by 'burning tapers' (shah leh do haw-eu). For the latter, an elder who knows how to do it, will light two wax tapers. He names one of them his own, and one the sick person's. They believe that the sick man's taper 'goes and looks' to see whether the person will live or die. If he will, live, it will, burn well. But if he will soon die, it will splutter and smoke badly. It may even go out. If the sick man's taper burns well but the other one does not, then it means that there will be sickness in the home of the man who is conducting the experiment. K-29 had done this many times (one hundred or so, he said). X-28 had not done it, but tie had Been K-29 and others do it. It is similar to looking at an egg, which is done a great deal for this.

There are certain 'signs' which indicate that someone will die. If a crow flies over and calls out at the same time, this presages a serious illness, maybe even death. If a drongo bird flies over the village calling out, there is sure to be a death. If someone in the village has a dream of killing a monkey or porcupine, then a child in the village will die. If someone sees a tree falling over in a dream then some neighbor is sure to die. If someone dreams of killing an animal, other than a monkey or porcupine, then this means an elder in the village wit], die.

There are also certain physical signs they look for in the person who is sick. If his 'chest goes up' (k'ah, go la'—eu), then they feel he is quite near death. They believe that the general time of day when elders and children die is different. Elders will either die about 9 or 10 in the morning, or late in the afternoon, or at night around 10. or 'before sunrise' (u bya bya taw). Children will die early in the morning, or just after sunset. Those who have committed one or more terrible crimes in life have a very difficult time getting past the 'black 'log' (dm,, ma dm,, na k'ah' dzeu—i—eu). That is why they must suffer so much when they die.

When an elder is near death, if the villagers want to, they may extend his life for a day or two by 'offering a pig' (pu za tu—eu). When a person goes into a coma, and is near death, the Akhas will often beat a piece of metal (shm k'aw k'eu-eu). It can be any metal. They say that the sound of metal travels very far. "even to God's place". white beating it they will call out. "Don't die — come back" They believe that this custom started when Tah, pah,. died. When they beat on metal, she came to life again.

K-29 told how his grandmother was once in a coma, and not breathing well. They did this this for her, and she lived for six more years. She was 89 when she died.

When a man has been a great hunter, and has killed ten or more of the 'big four' (k'aw, k'eu sha) animals, often he will have a hard time dying, since the 'owners spirits' (yaw sah") of the animals he has killed are arguing with him, and are blocking the way to God's place.

So the Akhas will do this. They will bring a full grown dog into the room with the sick man. It can either be his own, or purchased for the purpose. Then they put the cord that is around the neck of the dog into the hand of the man who is sick and say, Here, take the dog and go (le—aw). Let the dog chase away the 'owner- spirits' (yaw sah)" Then the man will die easily, and quite soon. Or he will get well again. After doing this, a non-relative will lead the dog out and kill it. Non—relatives and the village priest will eat the meat. I have heard of villages where there has been no one who was considered 'proper' to eat the meat so they just took the dog out to the grave and tied it up out there. If someone is very sick, but his 'tree of life' has not 'fallen' (zi' baw law—eu) as yet, they have a ceremony whereby they can 'often' (not always) extend life (zi' baw taw_eu, or, jeu. tsar, neh,-eu). To do this, someone goes out and cuts down a sapling of a certain type of palm tree (zaw). It is taken to the house of the sick man.

They tie a red or white cloth around it and stand it up on the floor beneath the ancestor altar, 'as if it were living'. They also prepare various 'dishes'. One consists of three 'white rice balls', and two 'black rice balls' made by some woman. Usually either the wife or daughter-in-law make them. They also have liquor, water, tea, 'holy rice' (with an egg), broken rice (also with an egg), and pork. There must be a spirit priest, or someone who knows how to repeat the proper spirit incantations, in charge of this ceremony. He will first repeat the incantations for the sick man. Then he will take a pinch of each of the things in the dishes, and bring it to his mouth. Then he will take a pinch of each food, and put it into the open hand of the sick man. He and several other elders there then help the sick man to raise this to his lips to eat.

After that, the elders present tie strings around the sick man's wrist, and then they all feast. Usually two pigs, of different sex, are killed for this. K—28 saw them kill four pigs for a wealthy man once. The food that is left over in the dishes can be eaten by anyone, even girls and women". Sometimes there are those who know they are going to die. These are the 'sinless' ones (i ba' ma, na,—eu tsaw ha). They will ask their children to change and put their grave clothes on them. Also, they will say what child is to get what object. They usually do this before they get real sick.

They take the final word that an elder says as to how many buffaloes to offer for his funeral. as binding. If he says to offer two, and they just offer one, then they feel that there is certain to be sickness among those who are left. If he says to offer one, but they can somehow manage to offer two, however, then that is even better. Of course he will not say to offer two unless he is sure it can be done.

They can often tell when a person has only one or two hours to live by the way the sick person's 'tongue becomes' - that is, he does not speak as distinctly as before. To check to see if a person has really died, they look especially for cessation of breath. They also feel the pulse in the wrist and leg, feel the beating of the heart, and sometimes press the flesh to see if it comes back into shape normally. When a person is actually dead, they do not practice any method of resuscitation. However, if a person is about to die, and even though his time of death has come, they sometimes give him seven days of life' (shi deh deh—eu). The elder who knows how to do it takes 'holy water', and repeats the proper spirit incantations over it. Then he gives just a little of it to the sick person to drink, and wipes it on his body three times. This, they feel will extend his life for seven days.

When a person dies in the Loimwe area, someone will call out, Come and look. But most who hear this are afraid and run. Those who do go to visit the house where the person died will first slice off three little slivers of ginger root, and tie them with a string somewhere on their clothing. This is to keep the spirits, especially the 'ghost' (shi' pi') of the deceased, from doing anything to them. I have heard from P-2 that in Thailand they strike gongs and sometimes blow pipes when an elder dies, but they do not do this in Kengtung State as far as I know.

All Akhas who have faithfully followed the Akha 'religion' (zah') in life, go to Tm., lah' in death. That is where their religion originally came from. But they first of all have to cross two streams, Ui' ne' law' ba, (the Satween, 'always muddy'), and Ui' gah' law ba,, (the Nala river in China). They say that the money they put in the mouth of the dead person is to pay the ferry- man for the crossing. Actually, according to their proverbs (daw,, da) there are 12 places where they have to cross. The ones in the Xengtung area say they cross the Salween first.

Just before an elder dies, all of his children and grandchildren gather around him and hold his hand (sa taeh' pu,—eu) until he dies. This is a form of 'worship'. If they do not do this they believe their own 'luck-blessing' (gui. lah,) will diminish.

While doing this they say, “You take all, of the sickness with you, and don’t cause sickness on those who remain behind. Don’t let there be ‘poverty’ (sha—eu zah,-eu). Just let there be good. Carry away (pi ji’ le-aw,,) all of the ‘evil’ (yaw doi. The wife, or the oldest son, will say for them all, “Be satisfied with your death. Don’t ‘remember’ (g’aw,sha ga) the living. Go to your place of death well. Etc.”

If there is a guest in the house where a person dies he must give some money to the family to buy either an egg or a small chicken, to be used in the offerings that will be made for the one who died. If the guest does not give this, he will have a shortened life. Almost always the guest will change his place for staying overnight when someone in the house dies. This is not because he has to, but because he is afraid of the dead person’s ‘ghost’ (shi pi). After a person has died, when relatives go to the house to visit, the men bring cloths (pyaw,. k’a,) to put over the body, and women bring cloths (k’aw, dab.) to put under the body when it is buried.

FUNERAL

When an Akha has died a ‘good’ death in a house (good in the sense that it is not a ‘terrible’ death, or an unmarried woman dying in childbirth), the family and villagers have a certain amount of respect and fear for the corpse. Respect in the sense that if they do everything just right in the preparation and burial of the Corpse, the person will become a benevolent spirit that will be of aid to them in the future. Fear, in that if they mishandle, the spirit, incantations and the main customs that have to do with the burial, and thus make it a ‘bad’ burial, the person will become a vicious spirit who will, cause them trouble in the future.

For the most part the burial of ‘elders’ (tsaw maw), whether male or female, follows the same pattern. The following will be that pattern for the most part, with additional notes describing differences. Also, it should be noted that very poor people, or those with few relatives to help them, will have a much more limited ceremony. The ceremony for children who have been named is also basically similar to the following pattern. In the case of children, however, rather than their ‘sons’ doing this and that, it must be the father and mother that do most of the preparation. Also, many ceremonies are left out when burying Children.

The funeral falls into four main sections. The first is the preparation of the body and Coffin, in which the village priest is the Coordinator and leader. The second is when the spirit priest comes and officiates at various sacrifice and spirit incantations. This may be several months after the first section. The third is the actual burial, which is in the hands of the village elders. The village priest and spirit priest must not even attend rest of the body too. The ideal person to do the washing is the eldest son, whether the deceased is male or female. But after the son has started, other male relatives will help him. When it is an old woman that died, after her son has started washing the body, old ladies will usually take over the job and wash the corpse. Nothing is mixed in the water when they do this.

2. ‘Wash the clothes’ (meh tsoe tsi,-eu).

They will have prepared new clothes in which to bury the person who died. Even though they are new, however, they put some water on some part of each garment and rub it a bit, as if they were washing it. I have heard of a few cases where the person who died was so very poor he did not have any new clothes for burial, so they took the best set of old clothes, gave the superficial washing and put those clothes on him. Often the person has chosen the clothes he or she wants to be buried in, as the headman in Pateh village, who had a beautiful black silk robe, evidently made in China, that he purchased several years before his death. K-28 and K-29 said that sometimes robes like that will cost from 50 to 100 old coins (roughly \$100-200 in 1966). Also, they said that very wealthy people buy lots of clothes, and all of them are put on them.

3. Clothe the corpse' (meh,, tsoe bi &n-eu).

This is usually done by the son, as in section one, with other close male relatives helping him, unless it is a woman, when the older ladies (a pi) of the village help. For a man, they put on a pair of pants, a jacket, a turban, socks and shoes, as a minimum. The shoes are usually canvas shoes either the Chinese kind, or the Western made kind they buy in shops.

For a woman they put on shoes (as above), leggings, a skirt, a bodice, a jacket, and most of her head dress. By most of her head dress I mean that they take off most of the silver ornaments. They must leave a minimum of three silver ornaments. The rest they take off and put near the coffin until after the burial, when her daughters or granddaughters can wear them.

It is important that all items of clothing be black or dark blue. The only time a corpse is dressed in white is when a first-born child dies.

When clothing the corpse, they must be extremely careful that none of the clothes get burned or scorched in any way, as from the fireplace, smokers, etc. The reason for this is that "living people can wear clothing that has been burned, but not dead people".

4. Tie thumbs and big toes' (pa. ma cu,-eu).

Next they take silk thread, if they have it, or a specially made cotton cord (sa, im,), and tie the thumbs of the corpse together. After that the big toes are tied together as well. They will untie these before the actual burial. While tying them they will say, "You have died. I am tying your thumbs and toes" (Naw' shi-eu rga. Pa ma cu neh nya".) They believe that if they do not do this the dead person does not know he has died yet. When the wealthier use silk threads, which seem to be preferred in the Loimwe area, they sometimes use several different colors but I have no idea why. When they use the cotton homespun thread (sa, Im.) I have heard from some that it must be white, "since we use the dark in daily use". But others say that they use dark for tying the thumbs and Lu of elders, and sometimes white for children. One thing certain. whether it is a silk or cotton cord it must be prepared especially for the burial and not used for anything else. After it is untied, before the actual burial, it is left in the coffin and buried.

5 'Recount the genealogy' (tsui gui—eu).

The preferable one to do this is a son. If there is no son, it can be done by some near male relative. If there is no one who can do it, the village priest (dzoe, ma) must do it. For the most part they start with Sm mi o, and give the name of each male ancestor right down to the one who has just died. This is the first time that his name is spoken out loud in the list of his ancestors. While an Akha man is alive they must not 'read' his name in the genealogy. There are many who feel very strongly that for this they should start with the very first names (t4,, ma,, 14, g'ah, etc.) when they recount the genealogy. After they have gotten to the name of the dead person, if it is a male, they repeat all of the names in the opposite direction. That is, they start with the dead person's name, then give his father's name, next his grandfather's name, and on 'up' the list. If they begin with Sm mi' o, they also end with him. If they began with 14,, ma,, 14,. g'ah they end with them.

For a female they repeat the genealogy of her husband if she is married, or of her father if she is not. Then they recite the name of the one who just died, followed by the names of the three most recently deceased female relatives.. That is, if her mother were dead, they would say her name first, and then her grandmother's name, if she were dead. If she were not dead, they would skip that name. Next they would repeat her great grandmother's name. They are then finished with her 'genealogy' tsui. There is one exception to this, however. When a woman's husband has died a 'terrible' (sha) death her name will appear in the genealogy (see more on this below). In that case, her son would recount her genealogy just as if she were a man, and following generations would include her name too, in their genealogy. The husband's name would be dropped.

6. 'Put silver in the mouth' (k'a meh-ah pyu daw ah-eu).

This is not done for children. It may be done before the above item, but is usually done after. If the man or woman had sons, they come up to the corpse and put little bits of silver into the mouth. It used to be that they would cut off little slivers of silver from 'silver lumps' (maw, seh pyu k'o") brought from China, but these have pretty much disappeared now. K-29 believes that some people have hidden them in the jungle in some area, however. So now they usually take a scraping off of a silver bracelet or silver coin. When the son puts the silver into the dead parent's mouth, some elder will stand nearby and say something like this to the dead person, 'Your son, Teu sheh, is putting the silver in. When you are hard up, use it to buy something to eat.' The idea is that the soul of the dead person will need the silver so as to buy things to eat in the land of the ancestors.

7. Wrap the shroud'' (maw tau tau-eu).

The shroud is a piece of white cloth made especially for this purpose. It is usually about seven or eight cubits long (10 or 12 feet), depending on the length of the corpse. They put the shroud on the floor by the body. Then they lift the body onto it, and first wrap up the feet and tie it with a cord (sac im.). Then they bundle it around the middle and tie that, and then last they bundle up the head end and tie that. Then they put the body in the corner of the men's side of the house, even when a female, on the opposite side from the sleeping area. It will be left there until it is buried.

8. 'Cover with silk cloth' (boe, bui sheu dm—eu).

This is not done for children. If there are sons they do this. They bring a red or orange silk cloth (yaw ne) that will be large enough to cover the corpse. As they put it on the corpse they say, "Naw-ah' boe,, bui iheu dm neh,, nya (We're putting on the silk covering.) This cloth is not tied on, but just left loosely on the corpse. If they do not have silk, they can use a blanket. The blanket can be of any color.

9. 'Tying the head' (bo ne u, tsah, tsah-eu).

This is not done for children. Next the sons will bring a red or orange (yaw ne") silk cloth, and fold it carefully over the head of the corpse. While doing it he will say, "I'm putting on the head covering". This takes the place of a turban. This also is not tied on, but is left loose. If they do not have silk, any red cloth will do, but it must be red.

10. 'Burning the chicken' (dah k'a, k'a.-eu).

Someone from the household of the dead person catches a small chicken. He will first 'ceremonially sprinkle' it, and then kill it by striking its head with a stick. Any man can do this. He will, then hold it over the fire a moment to singe it and say to the corpse, "I burn the chicken for you" (Naw,—ah dah k'a, k's, ma de.) Then he will put that chicken (dah k'a,) into a little loosely woven container (kea lou), and hang it up on the wall near the corpse until the day of the burial, when it will be taken down, carried to the grave, and put on top of the grave after the body has been buried.

11. 'Purifying life ceremony'' (deh zah shaw-eu). Most use three grown chickens for this, although P-I. uses just one. If they use three, at least one must be of a different sex from the other two. After they ceremonially sprinkle and kill them, they dress them and make curry of them. They then prepare five 'dishes' on the 'rice table' (haw,, jeh), not too far from the corpse. The members of the family prepare it, in accordance with the instructions of the village priest, who is in charge. P-1 says that he has always seen nine dishes for this. The five dishes that are absolute musts are; cooked sticky rice, uncooked rice, liquor, tea mixed with some ginger, and water. Some chicken curry is also put on the 'rice table', although I believe they do not consider it as a 'dish' in this case, since it would make it an even number of dishes, and that would be bad.

The village priest first of all picks up the dish with the cooked sticky rice (haw nyaw,) in it, takes a little out with his fingers, and throws it over near the corpse. While doing this he says, I'm giving some of this 'life purifying' food to you.

Eat some of this food to purify your life, even though you are dead. Let the things you did that were impure in life be pure in death'. Then he puts that dish back on the 'rice table', and next takes some chicken from the chicken curry and throws that down near the corpse. Then he spills a little liquor, then some of the tea, next some uncooked rice, and last of all the water. When they throw, or drop food on the floor in these rites, it is just left there. If dogs or chickens eat it that is perfectly all right. Or it can be swept through the bamboo floor slats onto the ground below the house.

12. 'Purifying death ceremony' (shiv zah shaw-eu).

For this they must use a hen (dah shaw ya ma). After they 'ceremonially sprinkle' and kill it, again using a stick to kill it by striking it on the head, they singe it in the fire for a moment. Then they take it out and start plucking the feathers, throwing them into the fire as they do. They keep putting the chicken back into the fire, exposing different areas each time, to both burn away the feathers, and also to make it easier to pluck them. When they have plucked the chicken clean, they wash it with warm water, since we eat some of it. I gather this is to help take away the burned odour and taste, somewhat. Then they cut it in half. They take one half, and after putting a 'bamboo strip' (a "ne,,) through it, hang it up near the corpse by the 'dah k'a' chicken (see above in section 10). Then they cook the other half of the chicken. Before they gather around to eat that, the village priest pulls off a little meat, and dropping it on the floor near the corpse says something like this, 'I'm dropping down some 'purifying death' meat here for you'".

After the village priest is finished with this, the elders gather around the table with him and they have a feast on the chicken curry. But first of all, they all must spill just a little food onto the 'rice table' before they eat. All who eat in that house will do this at every meal until the body has been buried. After they have done this, the village priest takes the first bite (dza, daw-eu), and the others join him in the feast.

13. 'Repair the axe' (deu teh myaw—eu).

Sometime on the day before the coffin is cut, the spouse of the deceased must send an axe head to the blacksmith to be 'pounded into shape' (teh myaw-eu). The spouse will send it in a dish. Along with the axe head there will be some salt wrapped up in a banana leaf, some uncooked rice, some ginger root, and an egg. The food is for the purpose of 'begging' him to fix the axe in preparation for felling the tree to make the coffin.

He takes the food as payment. If the man is not really a blacksmith which sometimes happens if they have no blacksmith in their village, he still has to take the axe head and strike the end of it a few times with something metal, as if he were pounding it hack into shape. If he is really a blacksmith, however, he will start a charcoal fire, use his bellows, and pound it into the best shape he can. This axe head is later fitted back onto the axe handle by the household of the deceased. The next day, when the group of men go out to cut the tree down for the coffin, this axe must be the one to strike the first blow (deu dawn-eu). As further payment, the blacksmith will, get a rib from a buffalo they will offer to the dead person on the day of the burial. This is not done for children, however.

14. 'Vigil' (10,—eu).

Step number 12, above, is the last thing they do on the day of the death. Following that the village priest will tell the villagers that they should have at least one person from each house sit up with the family all night. For the most part, the younger people do this. The elders go home and go to bed. The family of the person who died must feed them and give them liquor to drink. They will stay with the family each night until the corpse has been buried. When it is a child that has died, they have this vigil just one night. During that night, they can gamble and 'wail' (tsaw ngoe ngoe"-eu), but they must not play any of the 'games' they play when an elder dies, nor must they sing the 'death chants' (see the following).

One of the main things the young men and boys do during this time is to gamble' (pa—i, di—eu). Usually they do not bet large sums of money. Even so, terrible arguments often break out, especially when they have been drinking quite a bit. Before they throw the domino-like piece down, they often ask the dead person to help them win a lot of money. This is done in joking - they say. They can only gamble like this until 13 days (one cycle of days) after the body has been buried.

There is also a kind of 'game' (tsa, gm tsa, byae u) that anyone can play, provided the person who died has at mast on. living son. It can only be played when someone dies, up to the time of burial.

To play the game, they make 30 or so sticks from bamboo, a little longer than chopsticks. Then they gather near the feet of the dead person, and the first one will hold them all in his hand, then throw them up in the air and let them drop on the back of his hand, then throw them in the air again and hit them with his hand.

If the number of sticks left in his hand is an odd number, he keeps the 'odd one'. Then he hands half of the other sticks, including the ones which dropped to the floor, to the next person. They do this until there are only three left. They count up to see who has the most. He is the winner. But they do not bet on this.

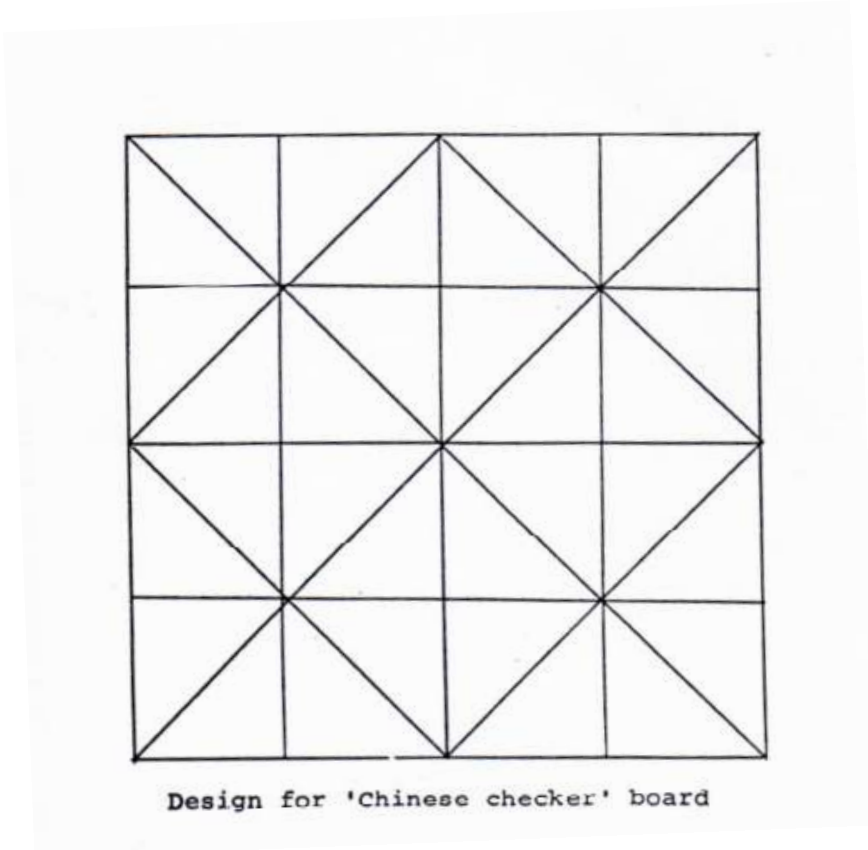
In order to 'pass the long nights' there is another game (jah ci-eu) they play. For this they have a plank of wood with lines marked on it. They must have the same number of lines each direction making it look something like a checker board, although there are not different colored squares. One player has four large pieces (jab, ma) which he starts with in the four corners. The other has the exact number of pieces required to completely fill, every other square on the board.

The one with the small pieces (jah, za) puts them on one at a time, while the one with the big pieces gets to move one of his each time a new piece (jah, za,) has been put on. Any time that a big piece cannot move either horizontally or vertically, which are the only directions either can move their pieces, it 'dies' and is taken off the board. Whenever there is only one small piece next to a big one, the big one can eat' it (take it off). If all of the large pieces are taken off the board, by being blocked, then the one who played the small pieces won. But if there is even one large piece left on that cannot be trapped, that person won. After all of the pieces are on, then the one with the small pieces can move his one square at a time, just as the other person does.

They also have a game called •Chinese checkers' (lam bui, jab,). They gamble with this game. It is played on a board with a design like that on the next page:

There are three large pieces in the center, with small pieces around the outside wherever two or more lines intersect.

There are 16 such intersections. The large pieces move first, and try to take the smaller pieces by landing between two. The smaller pieces try to block the large. Pieces can only land where lines intersect.

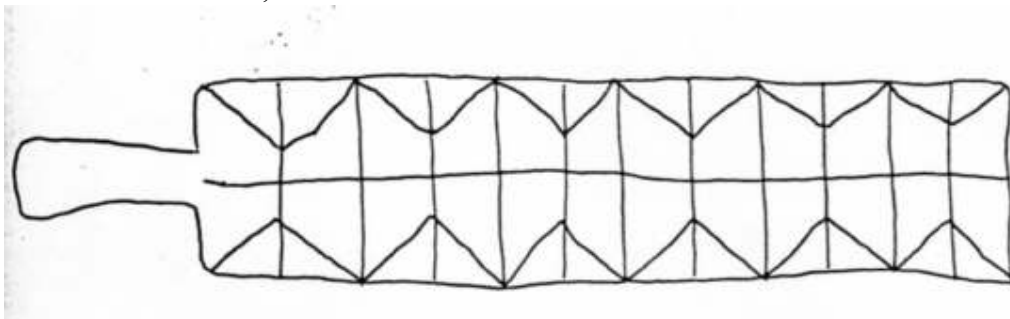


They also have a certain type of 'death-wail' (tsaw qoe ngoe—eu), that is somewhat like, singing. Only some of them know how to do it. If the spouse of the deceased can do it he or she can join too, but they do not have to.

They can do this in the daytime too, but often they have so much to do in preparation for the burial that they usually do this at night. They do not have to be near the corpse, but what they say is addressed to the one who died. The theme is: You are not the only one to die. Lords and rulers have died. 'Ja bi oe ah' (the creator of the world) has died. (The idea seems to be to try to make them content with the idea of their death.)

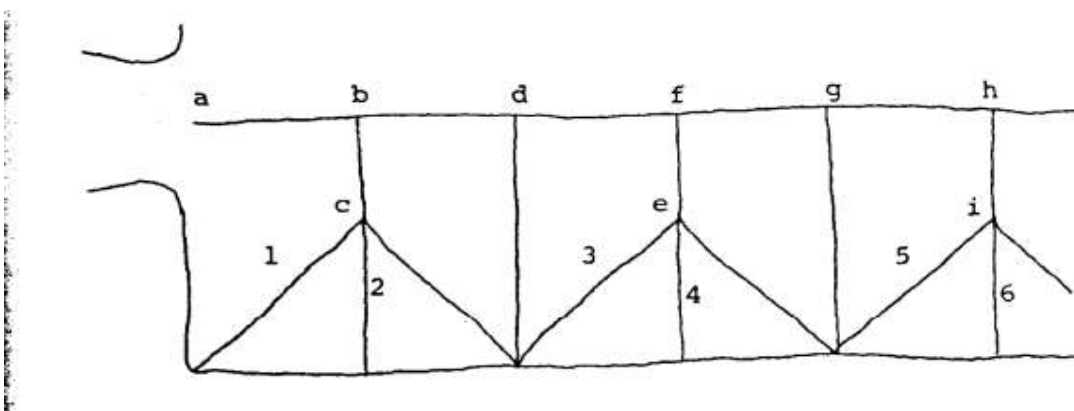
There is also a type of death chant they do in unison at this time. As above, it can be done day or night. Often the women do it as they pound paddy for the feasts.

They prepare a board (kui dei da pa), and read' (kui deu gui—eu) from that. Lines are cut on the board with a machete, thus:



They usually have several of these that they prepare. up to ten or so in larger villages. A group will, gather around a board, and as one points to the lines and connecting points of lines, he or she and the others 'read' (gui-eu) along with him. The women seem to do it more than the men. I asked one man to do some for me once 'and he did a little and quit saying. "I can't do it as well as the women". They must do it only up until the time that the person is buried, and never any other time. There are many different versions of this, all with different 'tunes', but the general version I have heard, as sung by K—28 and others, is written below. This is not done for children.

To illustrate how it is 'sung', I have an enlarged drawing of the lower section (that is, toward the handle on the left) of the board (kui deu da pa) on the next page. I have given letter designations to the intersection of lines which are important, and numbers to the lines which are important.



When they 'sing' (literally read') this 'kui' deu' board, the leader starts out by pointing with his finger to the intersection of the lines at 'd'. As he points to it he starts out singing, "deu" da, yeu", and everyone then sings it after him in unison. He then points to the intersection of lines at 'b', one down, and sings, 'leu" yeu, da", and then they sing it after him. Next he points to 'a' and sings "sa yi saw", which those congregated there also sing. He then points up to 'f' and sings ga sa si" with the audience responding as before. His finger then moves to the right from f", and as he points at the e' intersection of lines he sings, "ga bya naw", followed by the other singers there. Then as the leader runs his finger from 'e' along the line marked '3' he sings, "beu mi, ma", with a slight emphasis on the first syllable, then back to 'e' again where he repeats 'ga bya naw" each time being echoed by those present. Next he runs his finger from 'e' along line '4' while singing "a o ma", and back to 'e' where he repeats "ga bya naw", and back to 'f' where he sings "ga sa si," again. This is the end of one 'verse'. The leader then points down to 'd' "leu" yeu. da', to f' "sa,, yi saw", to 'g' 'deu" da yeu', to 'h' 'ga sa Si.", to 'i' "ga bya naw along '5' 'beu mi, ma", to 'i' 'ga bya naw", along '6' 'a o m to 'i' 'ga bya naw,", to 'h' 'ga sa si", and a second 'verse' has been completed. They keep doing this starting in the lower right section (as it is held up with the handle at the bottom), up to the top, and back down the left side.

There is another type of ‘singing’ they do at the time when elders die, especially when it is a big funeral with one or more buffalos being offered and people from other villages come. They call it ‘a, ci ceu—eu’. Usually they sing it to the people from other villages, welcoming them. The theme is; “We don’t have anything to feed you, but come sit down and have some tea to drink and food to eat. We have only one village priest, but he can’t do all that is needed. Let’s get ten village priests, and collectively do the customs. Only one spirit priest won’t be able to repeat spirit incantations enough. Let’s have ten spirit priests gather here and repeat spirit incantations.” Though they say they have nothing to feed them, they have mounds of food. This is to belittle their efforts. When they sing of needing ten village priests and ten spirit priests it is an indication that they believe this elder who has died is tremendously important.

Apart from the things they do to pass the time, those who sit up with the corpse must also keep a broom and a piece of firewood handy at all times near the corpse. The reasons for this is that sometimes the corpse will try to come to life again, some say. Or it will be attacked by either a werewolf (la” pya) or vampire (pi seu), and sit up as a result of such an attack, others say. Whichever reason it has for sitting up, they believe that they must strike it either with a broom or a piece of firewood and it will immediately lie down again and not cause them any trouble. I have yet to meet anyone who has seen someone sit up like this, but both P—2 and K-2 say that they have known people who have seen it. Whether they have seen it or not, all Akhas seem to be quite agreed that it is a real possibility, and the only means of defence is what their ancestors have told them to do, namely, strike the corpse back down with either a broom or a piece of fire- wood. It should also be noted that the combination of broom and a piece of firewood figure in a ceremony which will be described below (see section 18 of part C).

15. ‘Coffin preparation feast’ (da kaw, deu daw,—eu shi, ne ti—eu).

This is done the next day after the person has died. If the family is well off, they have this feast, both for elders and children who have died. I believe that some families which are hard up just serve tee. But if they have this feast, as a minimum they must kill a big, cast rated boar. Often, if there are lots of people present, as when a respected elder has died, they will kill a buffalo too.

The village priest and all of the elders gather around to eat the pork and buffalo meat. But first they feed the corpse, as they do every time they eat in that home until the burial. As they drop a bit of the food onto the ‘rice table’ they are about to eat from, they say, “I give some to you”. All who will take part in making the coffin gather for this. Three ribs from the back of the pig will be cut out and hung up near the chickens (see above), and later carried to the grave to be left on top.

16. ‘Go cut the coffin’ (da kaw, deu-i.eu).

The men who go to cut the tree out of which they will make the coffin will choose someone among them, usually a respected elder, to be the first one to swing the axe at the tree. Whoever is chosen, it must be his ‘propitious’ day (nah mui). The axe he uses is the one specially ‘repaired’ by the blacksmith (see above). Only men must go do this. Women and children are not allowed to go. The village priest, by custom, is also not allowed to go to either the making of the coffin or the grave site. The group going to cut the coffin will take along a ‘measuring rod’ (da dza) to know how long to make the coffin. For this they will take a length of a certain type of bamboo (ma saw), or perhaps a length from a plant they use in the making of thatch shingles (a leh tu). They first of all lay whatever they have chosen to use on the corpse. Then they will cut off one end with a machete to make it exactly the same length as the corpse. They also prepare three little bamboo containers to take along. These are called ‘la., baw law’.

In their customs, when speaking of liquor and tea, they call it ‘lay’. The ‘baw, law’ refers to the small bamboo sections. There will be liquor in one of these, tea mixed with ginger in another, and water in the third. These are tied together, and then tied to the ‘measuring stick’ (da dza). They also tie a live small chicken to the measuring stick.

The one who has been chosen to swing the first blow at the tree will carry these things. Besides the things mentioned above, other men in the group will carry the following items with them when they go out to cut the tree for the coffin. A small pig, carried in a loosely woven basket (k'a' lo), one egg, one banana leaf with cooked rice in it, one banana leaf with uncooked broken rice in it, and one cowrie shell. As the men leave the house of the deceased, they must not return to their own homes. They pick up their machetes and axes, as well as their shoulder bags, which they left on the porch.

As they walk to the jungle to 'cut the coffin', all of the villagers must stay in their homes and observe ceremonial abstinence (lah—eu). Also, the men going to cut the tree and make the coffin must not speak to any villagers while on the way to the tree or coming back. They can talk among themselves, however. Also, the villagers are not supposed to look at them, unless they are far away, as they go. But when they come back, whether they are near or far, the villagers must not look at them at all.

17. 'Choosing the tree' (a baw' -ah tse—eu).

The one who is to swing his axe first is the one in charge of choosing a good tree. First of all they look for a large one, and secondly they make sure that it has no hollows or fissures (k'a, bah,) in it. When the leader feels they have the right tree he says, 'This is a good one', in a poetic way (Mui,-eu sah, nga, Ja,—eu a dzah' nga.) Then they cut a little niche in the bark down near the bottom of the tree and put the cowrie shell in that niche. Not all areas do this, however. I have not heard of it in the Loimwe area. Then the one chosen to swing - his axe first says, "Please watch your tree and make sure it is a good one". Following that he takes the first swing. The men with him then take turns cutting the tree until it falls. This usually does not take long, since they are expert woodsmen.

18 The tree falls' (a" baw" law"—eu).

When the tree starts to fall, everyone who has gone there calls out "U"—u"—u", as it falls. Since calling out like this is only done when a tree is felled for a • Coffin, they must not do it at any other time they fell a tree. When the tree falls they hope it will not split open, for if it does, they have to cut down another one. K-28 said that one time he was with a group that had to cut down three trees before they got one that did not split. "The one who died did not have a good heart, and did not help us." When it falls, even though it does not split, if they • find that there is any kind of hollow in it, they cannot use it. Also, if it turns a Somersault as it lands, it cannot be used for the coffin. If it is a 'good tree', they kill the pig that they brought, cook it into curry, and have a meal of rice and pork curry.

19. 'Cutting the coffin' (maw din, deu"—eu).

Using the 'measuring stick' (da dza), they measure out a length from the best section of the tree which will be long enough for the body. They must keep in mind, however, which is the 'head' (top) of the tree, since the dead person will have to be laid in the coffin with his head in that end. Some Akhas, especially in the Loimwe and Meung Yawng areas, split the log in half, and hollow out a place in each half in which the body will be laid. The way that Akhas in the central and northern part of Kengtung State do it, and perhaps the older way, is to cut two sections from the same tree, the lower one to be the 'bottom part' (seu, ma), and the upper section to be the 'lid' (seu poe). Then they cut out a hollow section in each of these. Whichever system they use, there are certain 'designs' they have on the coffin, for both elders and children, and for both sexes. The bottom section (seu ma) has some wood hacked away from the bottom part of it in such a way as to leave four 'legs'. These are projections that will keep the coffin off the ground. The upper section (seu poe) has two 'wings' roughly made by cutting and hacking wood away from it, about midway between the two ends. These are made one above the other rather than side by side. These are to "keep the person from flying away". Then there is another roundish wooden piece left over where the person's heart will be, called 'k'ah dzah'. It represents the heart.

If they do not have this on the coffin, the person will not get to God's place. At either end of the coffin lid they have a 'nose' (na meh) that is left. If the tree is big around, these can sometimes be quite large. They do not do all of this carving at the spot where they cut down the tree, but work on it as they have time after they get back to the village. When it is a 'good' death, and a respected elder, they will take up to four days to work on the coffin. But they must not take more time than that. For others they can take a shorter time, but no matter what, they must leave the coffin in the jungle over one night. For that night, the men return to the village. They each go to their own homes, and there are no taboos on them. The next day they go back, work on the coffin some more, and carry it back to the village. The exception to this is when a man has died a 'bad' death such as a 'no-son person' (shin" byeh). Then they must just take one day to cut the coffin and bury the body.

Even so, they must still have the designs on the coffin, although they do not take time to make them very fancy when they have such a short time. When they are ready to carry the coffin back to the village, there are several things they must do.

First, the one who took the first swing at the tree either frees the chicken they brought (Meung Yawng, Meung Hka), or burns it up in a fire that they build near the stump of the tree which they cut down to make the coffin from (Loimwe, Loimi). Those who burn it (K-28, P-i, etc.), say that before the chicken (da' kaw, deu' daw-eu ya ci) is burned, the one doing it must kill it with a stick - if it is not already dead. Since the chickens they use are very small, and since it has been in the jungle unprotected overnight, often the chicken is dead by the time they get ready to burn it and return to the village. They believe that this chicken, whether freed or burned, turns into a bird that they cannot see, "but often hear". K—29 felt they heard it at least once or twice a year. It calls out "Ci—i, ci-i," with an unaspirated 'c'. They say that it sounds as if it comes from one direction, and then when you look, it sounds as if it is coming from a different direction. When they hear this bird calling out like this, they quickly knock on wood. When they do that, they believe that the spirits have been fooled into thinking there has been a death, "since they can hear people hollowing out the coffin", and they don't bother to go to that spot. Some call this bird 'deh, mah shi' za', and some call it 'shi"— a.h, The cowrie shell that was stuck into a niche near the bottom of the tree is then taken out by the one who took the first blow at the tree. He puts it on top of the stump, and with a machete breaks it to bits with one blow.

There are certain things they do which they consider to be the 'price' of the tree they cut down for the coffin. The one who swung the special axe first will take the raw egg which they brought with them, and remove just a little of the shell from the small end. Then he will put the egg, with the open part on top, near the fire where it will cook. After it is cooked he will peel it, and break off a little of the egg, which he throws at the base of the stump. Then he throws the rest of the egg into the fire, or he can eat it if he wants to. Next he opens the banana leaf that has a little cooked 'holy rice' (haw shaw) in it. He takes the rice between his palms, and while slowly rubbing his palms together over the fire, lets the rice gradually fall into the fire where it is burned up. He does the same (haw, leh leh eu) with the broken rice. Then he pours into the fire the liquor, tea, and water - from the three small bamboo sections that they brought with them the day before. After this is done, he slits open each of the bamboos with a machete and throws them into the fire. Last of all he breaks the 'measuring stick' in two, and throws that into the fire. Then they quickly pick up the coffin, and carry it back to the village.

20. 'Carrying the coffin home' (mawr din ba, la-i-eu).

To carry the two parts of the coffin back to the village, they cut down poles (seu, zo,), and then tie vines around these poles and around the coffin sections. • They carry the poles on their shoulders. They must not take the vines off from around the coffin until they get back to the village.

21. 'The welcome back' (ga daw, ga sha sha—i-eu).

When those carrying the coffin get back to the village gate, they stop outside. The spouse of the deceased then goes out to them. When the spouse sees the coffin, he or she says, "Oh, very good", in a formalized, poetic way. While saying that the spouse spills a little liquor onto the coffin. Then the spouse of the deceased gives all of the men liquor to drink. After that, they pick up the coffin again, and carry it through the village gate, and down to a spot on the upslope of the house where the body is, and very close to the body. The two sections are still tied together, but it is put on its side, with the two joined edges on the top.

22. 'Feeding the coffin' (haw, ga sa, ceh me-eu).

They do not do this for children. The village priest leads the ceremony. He has a 'rice table' set up near the coffin, which is still outside, with three 'dishes' on it. One has liquor, one has tea, and the other has cooked rice and meat mixed together (haw, ga sha, ceh). There are also three pairs of Chopsticks on the 'rice table'.

The village priest picks up first the dish with the rice and meat in it, and a pair of Chopstick. He holds the dish over the coffin, and digs the rice and meat out of the dish, so that they fall on the two edges of the coffin, which are facing up. While doing this he says, 'I am doing the ceremony of the rice-meat.' Then he puts down the chopsticks, which won't be used again in this ceremony, and turns the dish upside down on the 'rice table'. Then he takes the dish which has a very little bit of tea in it, and a new set of chopsticks. With the chopsticks he wets the coffin (again both parts) with the tea. Then he puts that dish down on the 'rice table' upside down, along with the chopsticks. Finally, he takes the dish with the liquor, and the last pair of chopsticks, and does the same thing. Then one of his helpers takes the 'rice table' with the dishes and chopsticks on it back into the house.

The village priest will then go up onto the uncovered porch (gui ga) of the house, and will repeat this formula, "Those children getting firewood and carrying • water, those females pounding and winnowing paddy, come" (Mi k'eh—a., nm, ui k'aw'—a, za., ceh" tah" ceh" za" a ma oe.) it should be mentioned that with all of the • feasting and ceremonies, they need lots of firewood, • pitchpine, water, and husked rice. So most of the children and women are out doing this. This particular formula that the village priest uses here must only be used when they eat this joint meal after death. They must • never call people to eat in this same manner at any other time. At this time, everyone in the village comes to the home of the deceased. They may be fed on the uncovered porch if it is not raining, or inside. It is taboo to feed people on the uncovered porch at any other time.

They can be fed in the house, however, at any time. If lots of people have come from other villages for the funeral, the household of the deceased may kill a buffalo for this feast if they are well off. At least they must kill a pig. Sometimes they kill a total of six or seven pigs and buffalos during this time just to feed the people that come. K—28 and K-29 said that they would judge that when the family offered two buffalos for an elder who had died, it would take another four or five buffalo to feed the people who came. The total cost would be around 1,500 to 2,000 old coins (roughly \$3,000—4,000 at official rate of exchange, 1966). This ends all that they do on this day.

23. 'The group eats a feast' (ma shiv ne ti—eu).

They do not do this for children. The next morning, they come together to the deceased's house. While some of the men 'fix up the coffin', the others will be killing and cooking a pig. For the 'fixing up of the coffin' they simply smooth it up a bit. It is mostly going through the motions. If there is not going to be any spirit incantations repeated for the person who died, some of the group will also go out to dig the grave (see below).

But some say that whether there is spirit incantation or not, this is the ‘proper’ time to dig the grave. Part of the ‘fixing up the coffin’ is the putting in of Cotton tufts (saw la tah—eu). The oldest son must be the first to put them in, and then others join him. They put them on the bottom, sides, and stick the tufts onto the rough places inside the lid, so that the coffin ‘lined’, in a superficial way at least, with cotton.

There are two pigs killed for the feast. The household of the one who died kills one (ma shi, ne tim-eu maw”), and the villagers kill the other (pu za). Both of the pigs are killed in the house, after the regular ceremonial sprinkling. But the meat from the two pigs is kept separate, and is cooked in separate pots. When the work on the coffin has been completed and the food is ready, they all gather in the house. One of the elders, or the village priest, takes a little meat from the head, foreleg and back leg of the pig given by the family, and as he drops these in front of the corpse he says, “I drop some of the feast meat here”.

After that, the village priest must be the one to take pinches of meat from the pig given by the villagers. As he drops them in front of the corpse he says, “Here is some meat from the pig the village has given for you. Eat it. At this time they also have a rice table’ in front of the corpse with five ‘dishes’ on it, with the contents the same as in step 11 above. The village priest spills all that is in each dish in front of the corpse. Then he and the others gather about the tables, and after each one ‘feeds’ a little to the corpse, the village priest takes a bite, and then they all eat.

24. ‘Digging the grave’ ([.m, bym” du-eu).

Although the time they dig the grave differs somewhat, they must always dig it ahead of the day for the actual burial. A group of men go to the west of the village (Loimwe and Meung Yawng), or sometimes to the north or south of the village (K—28), to the village burial grounds, to dig the grave. One of them, whose day is propitious, takes a little discarded metal scrap (shine ce) from the blacksmith’s shop along. When they get to the burial ground, he throws the metal scrap down on the ground in an area they all agree would be good for the grave. While throwing it he says, ‘Look where you are going to be buried’. Then the person who threw the scrap of metal begins digging at the spot where the metal fell. The others join him, and they dig a hole big enough for the coffin, and about five or six feet deep. As to the piece of scrap metal, they must let it remain there, since it has no more value. Whichever direction they go, the grave must always be dug in an east—west direction.

25 ‘Put in coffin and wipe away tears’ (barn ah-aw, mya bi al eu)

After the feast they bring the coffin in and put the body in it. They first of all untie all of the cords around it, and expose the face. The family then comes, each with a wisp of cotton. Starting with the eldest son, they brush the cotton across the eyes of the dead person while saying, ‘It can’t be helped that you have died. Don’t let living people hear you. Please die completely. I’m wiping your tears away.’ Then they throw the pieces of cotton into the coffin, and they will be buried with the body. Then they close the coffin and bind the two sections tightly together. They do not open it again. (Note: they do not wipe away the tears’ of children when they die.)

26. ‘New home creation’ (nym’ da da eu).

For this, either an elder or the village priest kills a pig. After cooking it, they take just a bit of meat from the head, the foreleg, the rear leg, and the liver. While throwing this meat down on the floor near the coffin he says something like this, “You have arrived in your new home’ (that is, the coffin). Your ‘home’ is not very good, and your place to sleep is not very warm. Stay well in it. In saying the above they be little their own efforts in making the coffin. Everything is now finished in the first section. Before the family calls the spirit priest, they and the relatives must get enough rice, pigs, chickens, and buffalos for the rest of the burial ceremonies, K-29 told of how his father died when it was rice planting time.

They did not bury him until they had harvested that crop, since they could not get the necessary food together before that. This is fairly common with elders. They sometimes wait almost a year. But I have never heard of any actual case where they have waited more than a year. When they have a long wait like this, they make a wooden or bamboo pipe from the bottom of the coffin leading down into the ground, 'to carry the liquids off'. They fix another bamboo from the top of the Coffin going through the roof, "to carry the odors off".

B. The spirit priest (boe maw) officiates.

1. 'Ceremonial feast' (sin ti k'o—eu).

This is not done for children. When the spirit priest arrives, the first thing he does is to go to the ancestor shrine of the house and repeat spirit incantations (neh to"—eu). These are the first spirit incantations repeated since the person died. The theme is, "Let there always be plenty to eat for this household. Let them always have good health." Following that, he and the elders gather around and eat a meal (si, ti k'o.—eu haw, dza,—eu). Before eating, they too will feed some of the food to the deceased. But this time it will be the spirit priest who does this first, since he is now officiating, and the 'rice table' is his, according to Akha custom, during this time.

2'Death ceremony' (shi' ka, zia eu).

This is the ceremony that the spirit priest performs to feed the great ancestor 'To' ma', the one who was the first spirit priest. Also, he informs the dead person that he is carrying on the customs for him. The spirit priest will have the following dishes prepared on a winnowing tray by one of his helpers (bce' maw, a, dzaw,) a dish of liquor, a dish of tea, a dish of tobacco with a tobacco pipe.

The helper takes this outside of the house, and puts it down on the uphill slope near the house. This is the same general spot where the coffin was put when it was first brought to the house, and also in a line with the coffin as it is now situated in the house.

The spirit priest then comes, and first of all spill some of the liquor on the ground and says, "Great ancestor To ma, come eat and drink." Then he spills a little more, and begins to repeat spirit incantations to the deceased. The theme of it is: "You have died. We are repeating spirit incantation for you. We are doing all of the customs (which are 'named) for you." When the spirit priest is finished with this repetition of spirit incantation he drinks the liquor. Then he takes the dish with tea in it, spills some on the ground, and repeats exactly what he said, this time to 'Toe ma'. Then he spills some more in the same way to the deceased, and repeats what he just said to him. The formula must be repeated exactly without any mistake. When he finishes that he drinks the tea. Then he lets a little tobacco fall on the ground for ma', and says what he said above again, and then he lets a little more fall for the deceased and repeats spirit incantation to the deceased. Next he puts the tobacco that is left into the pipe that is on the tray, smokes it. After he smokes this a bit, he goes to the porch of the deceased.

3. 'Prevention of terrible death spirits' (mn, sham zi

There are five dishes prepared on a winnowing tray by the spirit priest's helpers. These dishes are; sweet potato, banana, and three dishes with the following plants, one in each dish: 'myab la 'g'aw g'a la leh.', and 'g'aw myeu la zeu'. These are all common that grow in their fields. I do not know the English names. The tray is then put on the covered porch just outside of the men's section of the house. The spirit priest then repeats spirit incantations to the 'terrible death' (sha) spirits. The idea of it is to keep the one who has died from going where there are such spirits, and also to keep such spirits from coming to the village. After he has finished the spirit incantations, he throws the things in the dishes away. Then he goes into the house. They do not do this when children die.

4 'Freeing the hen' (tsah zah,—eu).

The family of the dead person provides a rooster and a hen for this. The rooster they give to the spirit priest, who in turn has one of his helpers take it to his home, if he lives nearby, or take care of it somehow so that he can take it with him when he returns to his home. The hen is let loose in the house it will later return to the household flock, but they must never kill this hen. They can eat her eggs, however. The spirit priest can do what he wants with his rooster. They do not do this for children.

5. 'Seeking a sign' (nm ka' tsah,-eu).

This is a way they have of begging the person who has just died to send back all of the help he or she can to the family. Then after the burial they can check and see by a sign what the future holds. It is done under the house, near the main post (jm zeu). The spirit priest kills a pig and a rooster. The helpers cook them, as well as prepare 'dishes' of liquor, tea cooked sticky rice, and uncooked rice. Then some members of the family bring lots of ashes from the fireplaces in the house. After they sweep a place real clean near the main post, at a place indicated by the spirit priest, they pile the ashes in kind of a heap there. In the center of the heap they put a dish with an egg in it. The egg is wrapped in a large leaf of a certain kind of tree (boe, soe). The leaf is tied with a silk thread. There is also cooked sticky rice in the dish. Then they put a tightly woven carrying basket (ka* o) over this. They cover it with boards, etc., so that dogs and pigs will not get into it. They do not open it up and look at it again until after the burial (see C16).

The spirit priest then hunkers down nearby and repeats spirit incantations something like this, "Rulers and lords also have died. 'Jar bi oe lah,' (the creator of the world) has died. Go live with the ancestors. Go live in God's place. Help your sons and daughters to have lots of children. Help there to be plenty of paddy. Help that there won't be sickness. Help that the domesticated animals will multiply. Send money." They do not perform this ceremony for children.

6. 'Coffin satisfaction ceremony' (k'ah ah jo—eu).

After the spirit priest goes back into the house, following the above ceremony, he goes over to the coffin and either sits or stands facing it, and does this type of spirit incantation, 'You live in this. This is a good place. Lords and rulers have died. Ancestors have had to enter coffins too. Others have had to die, and now you have to die too. We give you the 'main' sow. Go to God's place. Go on and die.' The 'main sow' is the one the deceased has had for many years, and from whom most of his pigs have come. Akhas feel it is not right to keep this 'main sow' when either the 'father' or 'mother' of the house dies. The 'main sow' is killed when the body is taken out to be buried. The purpose of the above spirit incantation is to make the spirit of the deceased happy in his coffin. They do not have this part for children.

After the spirit priest has finished with the spirit incantations, he kills two chickens (one rooster and one hen). The members of the household cook the meat, and then the spirit priest, village priest, and other elders feast off of it.

7 'Spirit incantation for the dead' (shi dzah to—n)

By this time it is the evening of the day that the spirit priest arrived. He will begin around 8 in the evening to repeat spirit incantations, and go on until 4 or 5 the next morning. Then he will repeat spirit incantations that day and night, and the next day and night. The next day, after offering a buffalo, the body will be buried. These three nights and two days of spirit incantation are extremely important to the Akhas. The spirit priest must not make a mistake. If he does, the family of the deceased can fine him, for it would mean that the soul of the dead person would not travel the correct path. Also, he would open himself up to the possibility of being 'afflicted (gu, la'—eu) by the spirits.

During the times of spirit incantation, the spirit priest must not eat or sleep. There are prescribed formulas that he must finish within a certain time, so if he wants to take a breather and drink some tea and liquor, and smoke some tobacco or perhaps opium during this time, he must have one of his 'assistants' (pie za) take over and repeat the formulas for that particular spot. If there is no one to help the spirit priest, or who knows exactly what to say, he must carry on himself.

He is not to go into the jungle to urinate or defecate during this time. If he does, he must have a purifying bath (shaw—eu) before he can take up the spirit incantation again. K-28 saw this happen once, with a spirit priest by the name of Ja yeh. He developed stomach cramp. and had to go to the jungle to relieve himself. When he came back, he had to take a bath in water that had some tea and ginger in it. He was then 'purified' (shaw-eu), and could carry on from where he had left off.

Before the spirit incantations, if there are buffalos to be offered, these must be tied up outside the house. If there is more than one, they must be of the opposite sex. If there are two buffalos (some say three), there must also be a stallion with a riding saddle, bridle etc. on it. Strings tied to one of the buffalos and the horse, if there is one, are brought into the house and the other end is tied to the coffin.

The main theme of the spirit incantation on the first night is telling how the deceased became a person. The spirit priest goes through his (or her) life from the time of his conception, through his birth, naming, various stages of childhood, youth, marriage, having children, having grandchildren, and finally his death. He also leads the deceased on all of the paths he has ever walked saying, "Let's look at..." (...haw beu). In this he must mention all of the important phases of the deceased's life.

8. 'Pork feast' (tah da, seh, dza-eu).

When the spirit priest has finished the above spirit incantation, it must still be before dawn. Then he and his helpers kill a small pig (tah da,), which is furnished by the household. His helpers cook the meat into curry. They do not cook the rice for the spirit priest. however. As long as he is repeating spirit incantations, there must be a special woman to cook for him alone. This woman (haw, m a, ma) must know just how to prepare food properly for a spirit priest. The rice for the others is cooked by the people of the house. This meal is eaten just after sunrise. It is considered the morning meal for that day.

9. 'Cut the post' (bah, zeu deu_i_eu).

They need a large post (bah, zeu) to tie the buffalo to on the day they offer it. A fairly large group of men who are not close relatives to the deceased (boe si, k'a), will go into the jungle, and find a certain type of tree (si sam). They must use only this type of wood for this post. The wood is hard to work with, since it is covered with hair—like stickers which get into their hands. But they get some repayment for their labors. They get the tail of the buffalo that is tied to the post. They usually cut the post about 10 or 11 feet long. It is usually about 12 inches in diameter. There must be one branch left on it, with 'plenty of leaves' on that branch. After they cut the post, they carry it back to a spot on the upslope (from the house), near the spot where the coffin is kept in the house.

Someone who has a propitious day that day, but not the village priest or spirit priest, must start digging the hole. It will be dug far enough away from the house of the deceased so that when the buffalo tied to it thrashes around it will not crash into the house. After that one has started digging the hole, others join in and help. They dig it three or four feet deep. Then before putting the post in, the spouse of the deceased comes, takes some uncooked rice and throws a little of it into the hole three times. (ceh' law_ tsi ceu). Then they are ready to put the post down into the hole. it must be guided into the hole by the spouse, whether it is a propitious day for the spouse or not.

After the post is in the hole, the ones helping throw dirt in and stamp it down into the hole around the post. As they stamp it down, the spouse again takes some rice and throws a little of it three times on the dirt they are stamping. Then the spouse takes an uncooked egg and throws it at the base of the post. They just leave it broken there. The rice and egg are meant as the 'price' to keep the post in solid, so that the buffalo won't pull it out. If the buffalo should pull it out, they feel that is very serious. They must offer a hen, and have spirit incantations, with 'five dishes'. I have not met anyone that has seen this, but K-28 heard of it happening in a village not too far from his. They do not tie the buffalo to the post as yet. If there are two or more buffalos, each one must have its own post.

10 'Prosperity incantation' (maw lm to-eu).

That day and night the shaman has a different type of spirit incantation which he repeats. One of the main things covered in this is the matter of the livestock. The spirit priest asks that the deceased will, help to see that the animals of the household are born in the right place (i.e. dogs in or near the house, pigs in the jungle), that the number of offspring will be right (i.e. only one calf for cows and horses, but three or more for pigs, chickens, and dogs).

He also begs the deceased to see that the animal's horns will not ooze blood, their tails (if cows) will not get caught around things (such animals have to be killed), etc. He goes on to ask that the domesticated animals multiply and flourish. Then he proceeds to tell the soul, all in very flowery language, how very difficult it has been for the family to procure buffalos to offer for him. He tells how they had to try one place after another, naming the Shan towns they had to go to, as far as Kengtung (K-28).

He also tells of the large amount of money paid for the buffalos. This is all designed to fool the soul, since it is very likely that they either had the buffalos ready for this event for some time, or they bought them from people in the village or a nearby village. But even when they do this, the spirit priest still gives a glorified version of it. Then after building up the family, the spirit priest tells the soul of the deceased how awfully hard up the family is, even if it is not true, and how the deceased should lend them money and goods. He keeps this up until about 4 or 5 the next morning.

11. 'Pork feast' (tah da, seh dza,-eu).

This is almost exactly the same as number 8 above, done at the same time of day, and by the same people.

12 'Final incantation' (sa, tseh to—eu, or tah tseh to—u).

Actually, since this spirit incantation does not really have to begin until after the noon meal, the spirit priest can rest during the morning period. Although they lay, the spirit priest must not eat or sleep for three nights and two days", it does not actually work out that way. But it is true that while he is actually in the process of repeating spirit incantations, he cannot eat or sleep. Right after the noon meal the spirit priest begins his incantations. 'Sad tseh' means to 'quit breathing'. This is the final incantation for the deceased. The theme is You are dead. You must not look back. You must go on to God's country. There are three paths. Do not take the upper one. That leads to terrible death' country. Do not take the lower one. That leads to the country where people who have fought wars go. Take the middle path. That will take you to God's place. Look, we are giving you two buffalos. We are also presenting you with a horse. Lead them along. Rulers ride on animals whose hooves have six toes (elephants). We Akhas ride on animals whose hooves have but one toe. That is what we give you. Etc. He also asks that the soul will remember the household it has left behind, to send back good things, increase the paddy crop, so that there is no sickness, etc. This spirit incantation is in two sections. The first is in the afternoon. There is then a break before sundown, and the village priest has a minor role to play (see below).

13. 'Calling the maternal uncles' (a. g'oo ma kw ui,-eu)

This custom is not done for children. To Akhas, an 'a g'oe' is any close male relative on the mother's side, although in daily usage it tends to refer most often to the brother's brother. The village priest goes out onto the uncovered porch of the deceased, and call, to all of the 'maternal unclog' (a. g'oe) of the deceased to come. First, he faces east and calls, and then he faces west and calls. The theme is, Come all spirits of the 'a g'oe'. I am going to call all of the 'a g'oe' to come now. The idea seems to be that he is telling the spirits of the deceased 'a g'oe' of this person that he is going to cat], the living 'a g'oe' of the deceased.

Before this time, word has been sent out to the 'a g'oe' of the deceased, and they have been called to come for the burial if they do not come for any other part of it, they are expected to be present for this night when very special recognition is given to them. If there is no living 'a g'oe', they appoint certain men in the village of the deceased to be fictive 'a g'oe' for that night. But if there are living 'a g'oe' that refuses to come, it is felt that it will not be long before some among them will die.

The village priest then sends two or three men who know how to 'sing the 'a g'oe' song' (a g'oe g'oe-eu), to the house of the pi, g'oe'. This man is the maternal grandfather of the deceased. However, they only use the term 'pi g'oe' for this occasion.

Then two or three men go to the house of the pi g'oe', who is sitting in his home with his friends drinking liquor, expecting these men to come call him. He first gives them liquor to drink, and then the ones sent by the village priest sing the 'a g'oe's' song to him. The theme of this song is Come to the house of the dead man. It is coming near time to bury him. If you don't come, we'll have to come call you three times. Etc. Then the pi g'oe, also using the same type of song or chant, starts asking, Why did he (she) die? Didn't you take care of him (her)? Didn't you do all of the Customs?

Then the ones sent answer, in the 'a goe' song, "Yes, we took good care of him. Yes, we did all of the customs. We applied medicine. But in spite of it all he (she) died." Then the 'pi g'oe' asks more questions, and they answer. All of this is formalized, and given from memory. After a bit more of this, the ones sent to call the 'pi, g'oe' return to the house of the deceased, but the 'pi g'oe' himself does not go with them yet. They go back into the house, drink some tea, and then after a very short time they go back up to the house of the 'pi g'oe

They go through exactly what they did before, with the drinking of some liquor first, the singing back and forth of the 'a g'oe' song, and finally the return to the home of the deceased. Then they set out a third and final time and repeat the process. The only difference is that at the end of the third time, the 'pie g'oe' sings something like this. "Since you have done your best and observed all of the customs, and in spite of that he (she) died, I will come and look."

But before going he invites the men who called him to eat with him, and they sit down to a chicken curry and rice meal. After they have finished eating, the 'pi g'oe' takes a red (or brown) rooster, and sets out with the men who called him to the house of the deceased.

It should be mentioned here that there are two other important 'a g'oe' that night who are also called. One is called 'ma g'oe', and either is or represents, the maternal uncle of the deceased. The other is called 'M g'oe', and is, or represents, the son-in-law of the maternal uncle of the deceased. These two are also in their own homes. There must be separate houses for each of the three 'a g'oe'. If they are real 'a g'oe', who has come from another village, they are given a house to stay in. Each of the 'a, g'oe' has a special dish of meat from the chicken which is killed at each house. In that dish are the chicken's head, one leg, and liver, and one wing. Only the 'a, g'oe' must eat these. What he does not eat is thrown into the fire at the end of the meal.

Then after their meal, these 'a g'oe' sit around drinking liquor all night, while they sing the 'a g'oe' song. The 'a g'oe' song can only be sung that night in the three homes of the 'a g'oe', as well as on the paths between the houses as they are walking from one house to another. It can also be sung in the house of the deceased, but since there is the repetition of 'spirit incantation' there, they do not do it so much in that house.

There is a lot of drinking all that night, but all of the men who have roles to play must not get drunk. Those who do not have roles to play often get drunk - but they continue singing the 'a g'oe' song.

When the 'pi g'oe' arrives at the house of the deceased with the ones who called him, there are some men waiting outside the house for them. As they approach the house, the men go to the 'pi g'oe', and while saying we lift the 'pi g'oe' up, they lift him up three times. This is a form of showing their respect for the three 'a, g'oe' in general and for the maternal grandfather in particular. Then the pi, g'oe' and the men who called him go into the house, and give the red rooster to the spouse of the deceased. They then remain there for a while, but before too long, the 'pi g'oe' will return to his own house, and the ones who called him will go to their homes, or one of the three houses where they are having 'a g'oe' singing that night.

Then the shaman's helpers prepare a 'rice bowl' (haw g'aw) for the spirit priest and the final repetition of spirit incantation that night. There will be a bottle of liquor, a gourd of water, a tobacco container with some tobacco in it, and a tobacco pipe. The tobacco container can be either metal or woven of rattan. This rice bowl, with the various items in it. is set near the coffin.

When everything is ready, the spirit priest comes and spills a little liquor and then drink a little. Then he spills a little water, and then drinks a little. Then he spills a little tobacco, and then smokes a little. Then he continues the 'final incantation' (sa, tseh toe-eu) until about 4 in the morning. When the spirit priest finishes the incantation, or is about finished, two groups of men are sent by the spouse of the deceased to call the other two 'a g'oe' (jm goe, ma g'oe). They have to go about 9 or 10 times before the two men finally agree to come with them. Each time there are various things that they sing back and forth in the 'a g'oe' song.

When they finally come, before sunrise, the 'jm g'oe' leads a male goat, and carries some uncooked rice wrapped in a leaf, and a boiled egg. The 'ma goe' carries a very little pig in a loosely woven basket (ka lo), and also has some uncooked rice wrapped in a leaf, and a boiled egg. As they get to the house, both of these men are lifted by the waiting men (the 'jm g'oe' first), just as the pi g'oe' was lifted. Then they go into the house, and put their gifts down on the woman's side, not far from the ancestor shrine. The goat is also tied there.

The village priest then goes once more out onto the uncovered porch and calls the spirits to come and eat. Then the three 'a goe', a. special guests, along with other relatives and village elders gather on the uncovered porch and eat the special 'a g'oe meal' (a, q'oe ma, bi dza,—eu).

14 'Outside feast' (oe pyu da,-i-eu).

At about the same time (it must be before sunrise), another house in the village that is not related to the house of the deceased, must have a feast for them. They have been told ahead of time by the village priest to get a feast ready, so they kill a pig, cook rice, and invite the members of the household of the deceased to come. Usually there will be 9 or 10 (about 'half of the household' — K—28, K-29) who will go. Before they eat they suit spill some of the food for the deceased. This is the only time, I believe, that they spill any food to the deceased outside of his home during all of these ceremonies and rituals.

14. 'Pork feast' (tah da seh, dza-eu).

This is the same as number B and 11 above.

15. 'Offering of the buffalo' (a nyo, ya,-eu).

For the most part they do not offer three buffalo any more, since it takes a very skilled spirit priest (pi ma) to do that. As they put it, "There aren't any of these 'pi ma' left". Some spirit priests are just 'one buffalo spirit priests'. They do not know how to offer two of them. Of course, a buffalo does not have to be offered but no one likes to bury his parents without offering at least one buffalo for them. For children, instead of offering a buffalo they offer a pig.

a. First, the buffalo (or buffalo.) is tied to the 'post' (bah zeu). The spirit priest leaves his spear and his Chinese style hat (law heu) on the ground, and goes up to the buffalo with a dish of uncooked rice in his hands. If there are two or more, he goes to the buffalo bull first. The spirit priest then points toward the east and say, "Come, God of the east (but do a poi, mi, yen), and look". While saying that he takes a little of the rice in the dish and throws it toward the east, then does it again, and then does it a third time. Next he points to the west and says, "Come, God of the west (la ga a, poe, mi, yeh)", and look". He throws rice in that direction three times while saying it. Then he points straight up and says, "Oh God (a, poe, mi, yeh), come down, sit on the crotch of the post and watch. And while saying that he throws some rice straight up three times (nyo, tsaw k'eh—eu).

b. Then he 'throws some uncooked rice' (ceh pyu tsi ka—eu) on the spot that:-he is going to stab. This is behind the left foreleg. He does this three times, according to K—28 and K-29. In the Loimwe and Meung Yawng areas, the spirit priest throws some rice first on the head, then the foreleg, and last the rear leg - in that order. He does it three times. Whichever way he does it, when he is through throwing the rice, he dumps the rest of it onto the ground.

c. Then the spirit priest goes and puts the dish down, and gets his spear. He does not wear his Chinese style rain hat (law, heu). He walks back to the buffalo and will sometimes say this. to the dead man, although actually looking at the buffalo, "You have three sons. I will kill this buffalo in three stabs". Sometimes they do kill it in the number of stabs they say. Sometimes it takes many more, "but that is all right if it does". Sometimes they finally have to pull the buffalo over by pulling on the ropes they have tied its feet with, and upsetting it before they can finally kill it. Akhas believe that if the spirit priest is really good, he can kill the buffalo in just one, two, or three stabs of the spear at the most. If while stabbing the buffalo, the spear blade or handle breaks, the Akhas consider this quite serious. The spirit priest doing the killing must quickly borrow a spear from someone in the village. Usually the village priest will have one, also the blacksmith, and other elder in a large village C-28 estimated that there would be 9 or 10 men who would have spears. However, if the spirit priest has to borrow a spear from someone, he must give that person one kyat, plus a rib from the buffalo after it is cut up. K-28 lent his spear to a spirit priest who broke his this way once, and collected the one kyat old coin, and the buffalo rib.

While the spirit priest is stabbing the buffalo, the close relatives of the deceased are standing nearby to help see that the buffalo dies without moaning. If it moans, that is a sign that the people in the home of the deceased will not be healthy. One thing they do to keep it from moaning is to jab a long pole into the buffalo's mouth, and then pour water down its throat. This keeps it from moaning, they say. Also, some of them pull the end of the tongue out of the mouth and hold it that way. When there are two or more buffalos, the spirit priest does not need to point and throw rice for the other. He simply stabs them. Then he goes back into the house of the deceased.

d. When the buffalos have been killed, they wash them. When the buffalo is offered for a man the eldest woman of the house (as his mother, or wife, or eldest daughter if both of the other two have already died). will take a little liquor and symbolically ‘wash’ a bit of the buffalo. If it is a woman who has died, it will be her daughter—in—law who will do this symbolic washing with liquor. Other close relatives will join the woman who has started the washing, and each will, wash a little. Following that, the close relatives and other helpers take water, and really wash the buffalo thoroughly. Also, if they stuck a pole in the buffalo’s mouth they will pull that out.

e. They next pour paddy over the head and neck of the buffalo, until they are covered, including the horns. This is called *ceh sheh teh, -eu’*. Then directly in front of where the snout is, they make three shallow little lines with a stick, and put bracken stems in these. Then they put nine cowrie shells on each stem. This is called *dah na k’aç-eu’*. These three lines of cowrie shells represent the three paths that the soul can travel (see above). The spirit priest then repeats a spirit incantation (*je shi toy—eu*), which tells the soul of the deceased, lead the buffalo and go to God’s place. Do not take the upper path. Do not take the lower path. Take the middle path. Etc. Then the spirit priest takes the 27 cowrie shells. He puts them into his special shoulder bag (*la yeh, peh tah*).

f. They next skin the buffalo and cut up the meat. The spirit priest gets all of the meat and bones from the ribs to the shoulders of the cow buffalo. The rest of the meat from both animals is then divided up among non- relatives (*boe mi si, k’a*) of the deceased.

g. They take the skin from one of the rear legs of the buffalo bull into the house. They then take a basket (*k’a’ pu*) and put nine leaves of a certain tree (*a ji a yeu*) on the bottom of the basket. The leaves are fairly large. They then put a dish of some finely chopped raw buffalo meat, a dish of chopped cooked buffalo meat, a dish with three pieces of raw buffalo meat, a bottle of liquor, and some meat that has been roasted. Then they put the buffalo skin over the basket, and tie it with a new hemp rope (*dzi a cam*). It is important that the rope be new. Next they put the basket in front of the ancestor shrine. This whole preparation is called ‘haw, yeh sha, yeh tso_eu. They also take a winnowing tray and place six ‘dishes’ on it liquor, tea, an egg, cooked sticky rice, ginger, and water. This too is placed in front of the ancestor shrine. Then the spirit priest repeats a spirit incantation (*haw yeh sha, yeh to-eu*), which is much like the others he has said before. The special emphasis of this one is that they ask for full paddy bins, and plenty of food to eat for those who remain behind. It is addressed to the one who died. During the incantation there is one thing he does that is different. He spills some of the things from the tray on the floor near the covered basket while he says, ‘Please eat, God’ (*A poe, mi, yeh-o, dza, aw, de.*) After this incantation, the spirit priest and other elders have a special ‘meal’ (*je gaw law baw daw’—eu*). Since they have already been feasting so often, they usually just eat meat for this. If anyone is hungry for rice, however, he can eat that too. Even if they are full from previous meals, they must at least touch some of the meat to their lips as if they were eating.

h. They then have the ‘final meal’ (*haw, dza, g’aw, eu*) with the deceased. They take a white chicken for this, either rooster or hen. Some elder, usually an old woman, kills it. The one who kills it cuts it all up, and the family members broil the pieces by putting them in the slits of sticks, and then laying them on top of the metal stand they use for cooking. (*shin kui*). Since they broil meat like this at this time, they must not do it on the metal stand (*shm kui*) at any other time, but must stick the sticks into the dirt by the fire. After the meat is broiled, they set up the ‘rice table’ near the coffin, and put the broiled chicken on it. The spouse of the deceased is the first to take some of the meat, and pinches it off, and throws it three times near the coffin saying. “We must separate. We are eating the meal of separation. The relatives are all separating from you. Don’t let us see you again.” Then after throwing some meat there, the spouse eats a little. Then the others who are there also do this. The very last one to do it turns the table upside down, and leaves it that way. Some say (K-2) that anyone participating in the funeral must be sure to eat this meal.

C The actual burial, with the elders in charge.

1 'Dividing the house' (nym bi neh,-eu).

The coffin is first carried by hand out of the door, to the covered porch (gui ga ceu) where it is put down for a moment, if the deceased is an elder. If it is the man of the house being buried, they 'divide the house' (nym' bi neh-eu) by taking three very short shingles of thatch and sticking them into the cords that bind the two sections of the coffin together. Then they put the carrying poles (seu zo) in place, and begin to carry the body to the grave. (Note: they do not do this for a woman.)

As they carry the body, feet first, to the grave. at least one person from each house in the village is expected to go and help. Neither the village priest nor the spirit priest will go, however. It is a day of ceremonial abstinence (lah-eu) for the villagers, so that those who do not go to the grave must just stay at home.

As the men carry the coffin out of the village, if it is an elder, the children can look at it. If it is the body of a child that they are carrying in the coffin, however, the children must not look. They carry the body out through the village gate. and the secondary gate (ka yeh). still feet first. But when they get a little way past the secondary gate, they rest a minute. When they pick up the coffin again they carry it head first to the grave. They put the coffin down by the grave, and then some of them jump down into the grave to dig it a little better' (due mui—eu).

2. 'Discard things of death' (kaw pa dzeh-eu).

When it is an elder that died, following the coffin will be a group of men carrying the bed on which he (she) died, plus the games etc. they used during the vigil in the house of the dead. If possible. it is good to have the son-in-law of the deceased older brother head this up. He is called 'mi dze mi ma' when speaking of death customs, although they say 'a du' in daily life.

3. 'Burn the clothes' (pa' ceh, do-eu).

Following those carrying the bed and other items (see above), there is a person who remains in the house of the deceased for a moment after the others leave. Whether it is a child or an elder that died, this man takes some real old article of clothing of the deceased, such as a pair of pants, or a jacket full of holes, and puts it on the end of a stick. Then, using the stick, he holds the article of clothing in the fire at the fireplace so that it starts burning. Then he goes running with it on the same path that they carried the coffin, and throws it away in the. same general area as they threw the bed and things that had to do with the vigil. If it all burns, that is all right. If it does not all burn, that is all right too.

4. 'Lower the coffin' (barn u-eu).

They next slowly lower the coffin into the grave. It takes many men for this, since the coffin is usually very heavy. They have a big vine at the head end - which must be to the west. They have another big vine at the feet end. Then they pull out the vines and discard them in the jungle. They must not use them for anything else. They also untie the vines that are around the two sections of the coffin and leave it untied.

5. 'Fill in the dirt' (mi tca, jeh ah—u).

When they are ready to fill dirt back in, the close relatives of the one being buried each take a little dirt that was dug to make the grave, and put it in a little place they kind of fold up at the bottom of their jackets. They then quickly drop that dirt into the hole. This is called 'mi ne la. k'awm k'aw ka—eu'. They do not do this for children. Then they all take their mattocks and fill in the grave with dirt.

6. 'Open the ears' (na, baw, pah—eu).

When the grave has been filled up, they take the vine that was around the head part of the coffin and stick it into the ground above where the head of the corpse would be, at least as far as they can estimate. They usually jab a stick down into the dirt first to make a hole, and then stick the vine in. Then all of the men who took part in the burial take hold of the vine and pull on it. As they pull it out of the ground they say, "Let the ears be opened". Some people say that it is enough if just two or three do it. The timing may be slightly different. P-1 said that they do this just before they return to the village, but K—28 and K-29 said this was when they always did it.

7. 'Sprinkle chilli powder' (is. pi' seh,-eu)

Often, though not always, they will sprinkle ground up chilli powder on top of the grave. This is to keep vampires from eating the body, since if they started digging down to it the chilli would make them sneeze, and thus discourage them from further digging. I have heard of men who were angry when a child of theirs died. They would sit up by the grave the first night after burial with a gun. They would shoot anything that moved near the grave, thinking it might be a vampire.

8. 'Leaving goods on grave' (maw, ta, ta-eu.).

There are certain articles which the deceased used that the family does not fee]. should be used by anyone else. These are left on top of the grave. They might include; a tobacco pipe, an opium pipe, a tea cup, the gourd he drank water from, the bottle he drank liquor from, the little pottery teapot he made tea in (law baw,, la ceh), his machete, his small hand hoe (lam ngeu), and perhaps even the 'rice table' (haw,, jeh) he ate from. Of these various articles, one of them must be left in a 'destroyed' (lam caw) condition. Even though the rest are usually in usable condition, no other Akha would think of stealing them. However, with some of the more expensive items, such as a silver box, they bury that down under the dirt a bit so that non-Akhas passing by will not be tempted to steal it. As to the used clothes and blankets, these are left at the house. After a cycle of days these clothes and blankets can be 'washed pure' (tsi shaw), and members of the family can wear and use them again if they wish. Or they can just be thrown away.

9. 'Fix shoulder bag' (pyu lo shui lo tso-eu).

This is not done for children. Before they leave for the actual burial, a brand new shoulder bag must be prepared to be left hanging on a stick stuck into the top of the grave. The following items are put in that bag; one leaf with cooked rice (shiv haw), one leaf with 'rice balls', three of them being black, one leaf with five eggs and some powdered rice, one leaf with a very small chicken that has been boiled whole, one egg in a leaf, three lengths of sugar cane (not in a leaf), three sweet potatoes (not in a leaf), and three bananas (not in a leaf). The leaves mentioned above are banana leaves. The one egg in a leaf (ga dza ti, cu) is for the dead person to 'eat on the way' (ga peh dza,-eu). The five eggs and powdered rice are for the dead person to take to the ancestors.

These various items are prepared and wrapped in the banana leaves by the older ladies of the village. But it is the village priest who actually puts them into the bag. The one who threw down the scrap metal and started digging the grave is the one who is delegated to carry the bag to the cemetery. But he must carry it in his hand, and not over his shoulder. A stick is cut in the jungle and stuck into the grave. They leave a crotch formed by a branch coming out near the top on which to hang the bag. The stick is not put in firmly, once they are hoping it will fall over before long. It is called pyu lo when they put the stick in and hang the bag on it. shui, lo tso-eu'

Tomorrow morning early, before they have eaten, they come out to look and see if the stick with the bag on it has fallen or not. If it has not fallen yet, the son of the deceased pushes it over (shui b, pya—eu). They believe that if it does not fall, their 'luck is not big' (gui lah, ma hui).

There are also the three items they had hanging near and above the coffin in the home that they leave on top of the grave. They are; the burned chicken (dah k'a), the half of a hen (dah shaw ya ma), and three ribs from the back of the boar they kill Just before going to cut the coffin.

10 Leaving stick flowers' (dzah yeh bi ja_eu).

This is something that K-28 and K-29 have never heard of, and were quite disgusted to hear. I have only gotten it from K—2, who has done it and seen it done in the Loinwe area. They prepare from three to six sticks that are shaved so that there is kind of a flower shape at the end, where the curled shavings are still attached to the stick (dzah yehm). These sticks are left on top of the grave.

For the woman that is buried, these mean that she will get the 'price' from the man who first 'opened her up sexually' (a, tah tah neh,-eu). For the man, it means he will get the price' from the woman who first 'brought him to coitus' (za, k'a, heu,-eu). Both of these terms are very impolite.

11.'Tying a dog' (a, kui, pam—eu).

If the person who is buried is a man who was a great hunter during his lifetime and has gotten a lot of animals they will often tie a dog at the graveside. It say be his dog, or someone else's. They feel that the dog helps him along the 'road' to the land of the ancestors, by biting spirits or the like that might impede the hunter's way. If the dog bites through the rope and returns to the village, some Akhas kill it and non-relatives feast on it. Other Akhas take it back to the graveside and tie it up again. They say that it will not die as long as there is a single grain of rice in its stomach. Sometimes they live on for nine or ten days. Although the above is done in the Loimwe and Meung Yawng areas, evidently the idea of sacrificing the dog is different in the Loimi area, where they put the rope of the dog into the hands of the hunter who has shot 10 or more of the 'big four' animals, and is having a hard time dying because the spirits of those animals are arguing with his soul.

12. 'Tying a horse' (mah, pah-eu).

If the deceased is one who had two or three buffalos offered for him, they must lead the horse to the grave that was tied up with the buffalos during the spirit incantations in the village. This is Only done for men. It must be a stallion, and must have the riding saddle, bridle. etc. on it. The horse is tied to a stake (mah, keu) near the grave. But they do it differently in different areas. • In the Loimwe—Jaw.eu' area they tie the horse very loosely. After the burial, the spouse of the deceased will hit the horse real hard, so that it will, break loose from the stake and start running away. Whoever is the first to grab the horse after it breaks away gets to keep it, except that it cannot be anyone in the extended family (pa) of the deceased. They consider that they are giving the horse to the father (a, da-ah bi eu mah,) when they do this. K—28 and K-29 say that they also tie the horse loosely, the wife hits it, and it breaks loose. But they expect it to come back to the village, where the dead man's son uses it to carry goods. The son must never ride it, since he has given it to the father, and spirits would 'afflict' (gu, la') him if he rode it. If the horse does not come back to the village, the eon must call the villagers and ask them to help him look for it. When they find it, the son must kill a pig and feast those who helped him look for it. The men said that this kind of horse does not live very long after being offered to a dead person, usually not over one year.

13. 'Return to village' (g'o-i'-eu).

When they return from the burial, they may bring the tools they carried with them, but they must not bring back any of the things they used in burying the body, as the vines. etc.

As they walk back single file along the trail, which is the normal way to walk, they are careful not to step on the heels of the person walking in front of them. If they did that, the one who stepped on the other person's heel would get sick.

14. 'Follow—me—not' ceremony (meh gu, gu-eu).

The way they do this differs somewhat, but they all do it. P—2 told how that in the Loimwe area, when they got to the junction of the path to the cemetery and the 'living' path (that is, the one they use daily), they make three piles on the path which leads to the village. Each pile would have a stick, a blade of thatch grass and some 'magic vine' (meh). The first one in the line returning home would make this, and then step over it. All the rest would step over it too. K—10 and K-28, however, said that they do this much nearer the grave. They take three branches, put them down on the path, then spit on them and say, "Phooey, I'm blocking the path for spirits" (Poe meh gu gu ma de.) K-10 and K—29 call this 'mi gu, gu,-eu', but it is just a dialectical difference, I believe.

Even after they have done the above, however, they are still afraid to turn around and look, for fear they might see the spirit of the dead person.

15. Washing up' (i cu dzui,—ou).

When the men get back to the village gate, they clear their throats quite loudly. This is so the children in the village will not look at them as they come back into the village. The children usually run and hide when they hear the men coming back. Then the men go to the home of the deceased, go up on the porch where they wash their hands and feet, and then go home. For this reason it is taboo to go up on the porch of an Akha home at any other time and do this, and then go home, without first going into the house.

16. Uncovering the sign' (nm ka' pah-eu).

This is done after the burial. The spirit priest and all, those there go down under the house to the place where they performed the 'seeking a sign' ceremony earlier (see above under 8-5). The family catches a rooster for the spirit priest to use for his spirit incantation. The spirit priest kills the rooster brought to him with his ceremonial knife (la yeh ji ba). Meanwhile, in the house his helpers have prepared a winnowing tray with the following dishes; liquor, tea, cooked rice (haw, shaw) water, and uncooked rice. This tray is put down near the site where they had the previous ceremony (nm ka). Also, the rooster that was killed for the household is put down on the ground on the winnowing tray, near the 'nm, ka''. If there are Sons who have started up their own hoc.ees, they also bring a rooster each from their homes for this. However, they just hold them there near the 'nm ka'' without killing them yet. After the repetition of the spirit incantations, while the spirit priest and the members of the household go upstairs and eat the rooster that was killed, each of the sons who has a rooster with him will say, "Come. father (mother)" (Oe-aw, a, da_ow)

Then he takes the rooster home, kills it, cooks and eats it with his family. That rooster is called (jm ku ya poe). The rooster that the family of the deceased eats is called 'nm, g'o pah-eu ya poe'.

When the tray and 'dishes' are all prepared, the spirit priest takes the dish with the cooked rice in it first, and taking some of the rice out with his fingers, throws it on the ground near the 'nm, ka' while saying, "I'm throwing this for the opening of the 'nm, ka'". Then he throws some uncooked rice down, then spills some liquor, then spills some tea, and then spills some water last of all - each time repeating the above formula after he has spilled each item. This is to feed the dead person.

Then the spirit priest and the spouse of the deceased go to the basket (k'a jo) that was turned upside down over the ashes, and both put their hands on it. The spirit priest will repeat spirit incantations anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour, while they both have their hand on the basket. It is much the same type of spirit incantation as before, asking for health, food, and wealth for the family. When the spirit priest is finished, he and the spouse together lift off the basket, and then everyone crowds around to see what the 'sign' in the ashes will be for the family.

Once K-28 saw two actual paddy seeds in the ashes. That was a good sign, and meant that the family would have lots of paddy. Once K-29 saw the ashes damp, which was also a good sign, although if they were soaking wet, that would be a bad sign.

They have both seen circular patterns which stood for money and as predicted, the families involved both got lots of money. K-29 said that the family that got money the time he saw the sign, later lost it all to the insurgents.

A thread-like sign, from an ant or bug crawling in it, I would imagine, is said to represent a silk thread, and it means the family will become wealth.

The worst possible sign is to see the impression like a person's foot print. This means that someone in the family will soon die. I have not talked to anyone who has seen this particular one, but K-29 said that his older brother saw it once, and it "came true". They do not do this for children.

17. 'Spirit incantation for the a g'oe' (a g'oe jm toe—eu).

After they are finished below the house, they all go back upstairs. The spirit priest takes the rooster, pig, and goat that the 'pi, g'oe', 'jm g'oe', and 'ma g'oe' brought the night before, and after ceremonially killing them, puts them before the ancestor shrine. He then begins his spirit incantation which explains to the dead person that all, of the 'a, g'oe' came, and now these 'a g'oe' are giving him these sacrifices. When this is finished, the helpers cook the animals, and fix four special dishes, three for the special 'a g'oe', and one for the spirit priest. Each dish has some meat from the head, the liver, and the foreleg of each animal (considering the thigh of the chicken as its foreleg' in this case). There is also a rib from the pig in each of the. four dishes. The four of them and the other elders then gather around and feast together. This is not done for children.

18. 'Drama of separation' (lam nyoe sha-eu).

This is a very important custom that the family of the deceased, whether adult or child, does the evening of the burial. This custom is performed preferably by 'an 'a, shah', who is the husband of one's father's sister, or an older sister's husband. He can do it even if the day is not propitious for him. If there is no a, shah' available to do this, it must be some other close relative. But if it is a relative other than the 'a shah', it must be an auspicious day for him. The custom is a re-enactment of the time spirits and people ate a meal of separation many generations ago, and then departed. It is to let the dead person know he is dead, and never to come back and bother the family or villager again. They believe that if they do not perform this custom, they will see the dead person in their dreams. The 'a, shah,' or close relative, takes the place of the 'spirit' (neh), which Akhas believe the deceased has become. When the relative is on the way to the house of the. deceased, and when he returns to his home, no on. in the village must speak to him - or even look at him. This is because he represent, in the. drama, a spirit. When the. relative enters this house he carries a machete on hi. left shoulder with the blade up. It is taboo to do this any other time. He also has a shoulder bag over the same. shoulder. In the shoulder bag he has a boiled egg, a small boiled chicken wrapped in a banana leaf, and a rice cake (haw, tam), also wrapped in a banana leaf. When he walks into the house he says nothing to the people who are there, and they say nothing to him, although they can talk quietly among themselves if they need to. The relative and the family Completely ignore each other until the. drama is over. The family has placed the 'rice table' near the spot there the coffin had been kept. Either beside the table, or in it (since it is turned upside down when the relative comes in), will be the items the family has prepared for this drama. Besides the 'rice table' they consist of a boiled egg, a small boiled chicken in a banana leaf, and a rice cake (haw tah). also in a banana leaf — just like the relative brings. Also, there are banana leaves with which to cover the rice table' when the relative turns it upright. Then there is a broom and a piece of firewood.

When the relative comes in, he puts the machete he is carrying down on the floor with the broom and firewood, the three of them making a 'dividing' line between him and the family. They will stay on their 'side' throughout the drama.

Then he turns the 'rice table' rightside up. He takes the three items (as list-'d above) out of his shoulder bag, and puts them on the table. Next he takes the identical three items prepared by the family and puts them on the table. He then proceeds to open the four wrapped up packages, in any order. When they are all open before him, he begins to break them up in little pieces. As for the two small chickens he pinches off some of the meat and skin. He makes one pile of this. Then on top of this pile he breaks off some long leaves from a large bush with leaves about four or five inches long, that grows on the mountains (gu ci gu ma). These leaves are provided by the family. He tears off three 'portions' of leaves.

After thoroughly mixing up the food that is on the table, he then divides it into three portions. One for himself, one for the family, and one for the 'spirit'. He first of all takes his pile and throws some food from it three times at the general area where the head of the corpse was laid. Then he 'eats' a little. Actually, he just touches it to his lips, or takes a taste of it. After this he turns around with his back to the table, and clears his throat to let the family know it is their turn, since they do not watch what he does. The spouse of the deceased comes and takes the mound of food provided for him (or her), and throws some three times at the same spot as the relative, then 'eats' a little. The spouse then goes back to the other members of the family.

When the relative knows that the spouse is gone, he turns around, turns the table over, with the portion of food for the 'spirit' still there, and 'just leaves it that way. Then he picks up the machete and piece of firewood with one hand, and the broom with the other. He uses the broom to sweep behind him, as if he were sweeping it all over closer to the wall. Then he drops the broom there. After that he fixes the machete, blade up, on his Left shoulder in the same way he had it when he came, and leaves the house carrying the piece of firewood in his right hand. When he gets out of the house he throws the firewood away. Anywhere on the ground is all right.

19. (Opening the haw yeh' (haw, yeh sha, yeh pah-eu).

On the day after the burial, the spirit priest goes back to the basket that was left before the ancestor shrine (see B.15.g above). He first of all repeats some spirit incantation, and then opens it up. The food inside is now considered ancestor offering food' (a poe, law dza).

The family sets up a 'rice table, but they do not serve rice this time. First, the spirit priest goes around and breaks off a little of the food from the basket with his hands. They must never use chopsticks to handle 'ancestor offering food'. He says, "Here, let me give you a little 'ancestor offering food". The elder to receive it then cups his hands together in front of him, but in an open position, and accepts the bit of food the spirit priest places there. He then brings the food to his mouth, with both hands together in the position in which he received it. After the elder has eaten the food, the spirit priest waits there 'just a moment, while the elder gets some money out to give him. There is no fixed amount that they must give, but usually those who are sitting at the 'rice table' give around one kyat each. "They are embarrassed to give less."

As the spirit priest proceeds to those farther from the 'rice table', he no longer feeds them the 'ancestor offering food', but he does collect whatever money they want to give him. Often a spirit priest will receive 20 or 30 pyas from those sitting farther from the 'rice table'.

Then the spouse of the deceased goes around and does exactly the same thing that the shaman did. They usually give him (or her) about the same amount that they did the spirit priest. He (or she) will use the money to help pay for the buffalos that were offered. All of those who ate some of the 'ancestor offering food' must also leave 25 pyas (ti, ceh). They put it on the 'rice table' before they leave. They do not do this when they bury children.

20. 'Final feast' (sha zah lah—eu).

By this time, most of those visiting from other villages have returned to their own villages. The spirit priest, however, is expected to stay for this. This final feast is held in the home of the deceased. The name indicates that it is the end of the 'hardships' (sha, zah). There is plenty of drinking at this feast.

One feature that is different is that this time they do not drop any food down on the floor or rice table' for the deceased. After this is over, the spirit priest returns home.

D. Post-burial rites.

1. Divide field' (jeh ne lah—eu).

This is done on the day after the burial. It is done only by the close relatives of the deceased. The primary feature of it is that the family goes to the main paddy field, the one that has the 'field spirit hut' (k'm pi), and 'divide the field' (ya bib' bi'-eu). They go to a poor section, and put some stakes in to show that from then on the deceased car, work that sect ion. It is often not larger than one foot square, but it must have some paddy plants in it. As they put the stakes in the ground they say, "We are dividing the field and from then on they must never plant or reap paddy there or make any other kind of field there. They feel that if they don't give the deceased a section like this, the paddy in the whole field will, be poor. They do this for both children and adults, anyone that has been named".

2. 'chicken feast' (sha shaw seh—eu).

This is done the day after the above, in the morning. It is also done by just the close family of the deceased, and has no relation to other villagers. They kill a chicken (ya shaw), and cook it with some banana stalks (nga lo nga jeh), and eat them with rice. This is the end of the funeral rites and ceremonies. When this meal is finished, they can go back and start working in their fields.

Although this outline is the basic plan most Akhas follow, there are also variations.

Some, in the Northern part of Xengtung State. have two further ceremonies they perform the day before an adult is buried. The first one (sha m law—eu) is led by a spirit priest. After offering a male goat, the spirit priest will repeat a spirit incantation, the theme of which is, 'Dont let spirits come. Don't let those who have died a terrible' (sha) death come.' This is done outside of the home of the deceased. The second (law, seh seh-eu) is also done outside the hone, in the same spot as the above, and just after 'it is completed. For this they offer a buffalo, if they have it, or at least a pig. This is to insure much 'luck—blessing' (gui lah) for the family. While offering either the pig or buffalo and then feasting the people who have cone, the family will often bring out whatever silver they have, and put it on the uncovered porch (gui' ga) to 'show God' (a poe. mi yeh). This silver is usually the silver lumps (maw seu, pyu k'o) they have. When this ceremony is over, they take their silver back and put it in their ancestor shrine basket (a, poe paws law pu tu'), or re-bury it, or put it wherever they keep it.

MOURNING

The sons of a person who has died must not hunt any of the 'big four' animals for one whole year. The primary reason for this is that they believe that the dead person "lives and dies nine times a day, and becomes nine things". They especially become one of the 'big four' animals, as well as barking deer and monkeys.

After one month has elapsed, the sons of the dead person may go fishing, and may also start hunting cert ain types of small game, such as jungle fowl, pheasant, and porcupine. Many people also observe the above taboos for any deaths in one's household, but others seem to relax it a bit when it comes to the death of children.

If it is the father of a household that has died, they give out the inheritance one cycle of days after his death. One cycle of days after an adult has been buried, they have a ceremony (shi y'eh da—eu). For this they call back the same spirit priest who came when they had the funeral. The family provides the following sacrifices; one goat, one pig, and one chicken. After the spirit priest sprinkles them ceremonially and kills them with his ceremonial knife, he puts them on the path, 'just inside the village gateway. Then, while facing away from the village, and with the three dead animals in front of him, he begins to repeat spirit incantations (shi la kw-ei). The theme of this is; "Only you must go to the place of death. Don't call your wife (husband) and children. Don't Lead them on the way to death. You have died. We have given you animals to lead along. Let there be nothing but good health here. Etc.

The village priest and other elders of the village also go with him. There is a winnowing tray placed by the bodies of the three animals with the following five 'dishes'; 'holy rice' (with an egg in it), cooked sticky rice, liquor, tea, and water. The spirit priest takes the things from the tray and drops them on the ground as he is saying the above. He is feeding the one who died.

When they are finished they take the three animals back and cook and eat them. But it must be in the home of a non—relative. This is called 'pie sha lu-eu'. If the widow of the deceased has no sons, she must remain in the village where she and her husband lived until she remarries. Then she must move out. When she leaves she must take only what is her own property. That is the clothes she wears, any cloth that she has woven, anything she may still have from her dowry, and that sort of thing. She will, not take the ancestor shrine, since that was destroyed at her husband's burial, who was buried as a 'shm byeh'.

If the widow has a son, she can move back into her father's village if she wants to, provided she: 1) takes the ancestor shrine with her, and 2) does not remarry yet. Or she may stay in the village where she and her deceased mate lived. When she remarries, the son (or sons) must be taken back to the village of her deceased mate, with the ancestor shrine which really 'belongs' to them. If they are young, they will have to live with some paternal uncle or grandfather. and 'their' ancestor shrine will temporarily be tied to the ancestor shrine of the relative they are living with. When the son is old enough to make the 'ancestor offering' (a poe law-eu) by himself, they will 'divide' the ancestor shrines, and he will get hi. back again to put up in his new house. They usually do this when he gets married.

The widow can get married three months after the death of her mate, although there does not seem to be any hard and fast rule on this. If she marries earlier than that she will not be fined. However, the elders feel that if she really knows the customs and respects them, she will not get married for two or three years after the death of her husband". But this is just theory, I believe. They usually get married much sooner than that. The elders have the last word, however, for they say, "If they get married right away, they will not have 'luck-blessing'".

If the widow sleeps with another man, the village priest will fine her, since this is a 'religious' offence. K-28 told of fining one widow and the man who slept with her, in her house, one bottle of liquor the first time. They both had to contribute toward it. The elders drank it. The couple slept together again, and K-28 fined them a 'one—pig curry feast' for the whole village. This meant that the two of them had to provide the pig, rice, chilli, salt, etc. for the feast. Some of the villagers helped with the cooking of it. Actually, the man was unmarried and could have married the widow, and they would not have been fined at all. But since they 'stole sleep' (yu k'oe,-eu) in her house in the village, this was a wrong that could make trouble with the spirits for the whole village. K-28 went on to say that if the man had been married he would have been fined '20 ga (roughly K 45). Of that money, the village priest would have gotten 'one ga* (about K 2.25), and the rest of the money would have gone into the village fund.

They sometimes have to rebury the body of a person who has been buried. If after burying the body they find that there is a great deal of sickness in the village, or livestock is being taken by wild animals, they suspect something was wrong with the burial. One time in K-28's village this happened, and so one of the elders said. "Wed better go look at the coffin. The person must have been buried wrong. It looks like we may have to rebury him.

K-28 was one of those who went to look. He was not yet a village priest. They could tell from the way the carrying pole (seu zo) for the coffin had been put on the grave that they had buried the body in, that the head had been buried to the east instead of to the west. (The carrying pole is supposed to point the same way as the coffin.) They did not dig it up that day, but the next day they returned with tools, and dug a big area around the coffin. They then lifted it up, turned it around, put it back in, and covered it up with dirt. Nothing was said, and no rituals were performed. They went back to their village without any follow-me-not ceremony' (meh gu, gu,—eu). The sicknesses then got better, and the wild animals stopped bothering their livestock.

Exactly one year after an elder has died, one for whom at least one buffalo has been offered, they call back the same spirit priest who officiated at the burial. He leads in the ceremony (jm lo m jaw k'eh—eu). For the ceremony, the family provides one boar and one sow, and a rooster and hen. The spirit priest kills the pigs first, then the chickens, using his ceremonial knife.

Next he takes three small branches from a certain type of tree (boe, soe), and washes them off with liquor. This is called 'paw, law shaw—eu'. He then drinks the rest of the liquor. After that he puts the branches onto the winnowing tray while he repeats spirit incantations (see below). When that is finished, he puts them up into the roof near the ancestor altar, and leaves them there to rot.

The theme of his spirit incantation is, 'Look after the ancestor altar. Look after the children left in the house. Come back down and guard the house.' It often takes six or seven hours to repeat all of the incantations they have for this. It should be noted that at the time of his death, the emphasis was on getting the spirit of the dead person to leave and go up' to God's place, etc. But now, for the first time, the spirit is begged to come 'down' and guard the family, hoe, and ancestor shrine. They must feel that they need to wait one full year before asking the spirit of the deceased to return.

Following this ceremony, the period of mourning is ended. The sons can hunt any kind of animals again. The men, at least, consider this one of the most important aspects of the end of mourning, since they almost invariably mention the fact that they can go hunting again as the really important part of the end of mourning for the dead.

DEVIANT MORTUARY PRACTICES

When an Akha, either male or female, dies of 'certain accidental or violent causes, special ceremonies must be performed before they can be brought back to the village and then buried with other people. The causes of death might be a tree falling on the person, lightning striking, falling down and dying during an epileptic seizure, becoming crazy and dying, being burned to death in the jungle, etc.

There are three types of death, however, which cannot be treated in this way. This kind of death is called 'she' and is greatly feared by Akhas. The three types of death are being killed by a tiger or leopard in the jungle (la, dza, tm ma, g'o - in more polite language), drowning in a river or lake (i ga tsi, ma, di - in more polite language), and dying of smallpox. There is no really 'polite' term for this latter. They merely say a si, taw ma na seh-eu'. When a person dies any of the above three sha deaths, no matter how wealthy the family might be, there is no offering they can make, and no spirit priest who can repeat spirit incantations, for these types of deaths.

There are a few who will say that a very good spirit priest (pi ma) would be able to repeat the spirit incantations necessary so that a drowned person could be brought back into the village, and then be buried with others. But many Akhas say this is not true. They tell of two leading spirit priests who broke up in a violent quarrel many generations ago, and split up. From that day to this, they say, the ability to repeat spirit incantations for drowned people has been lost.

The Akhas say that there is no 'spirit owner' (yaw sah) or smallpox, and thus no one to give spirit incantation. Moreover, the ancestors have specifically instructed them, "Don't repeat spirit incantations for those who have drowned or been killed by 'cats' (k'a la) ". When there has been a 'terrible' (sha) death take place in the jungle, the family of the person involved and the village priest are notified immediately. If the body has not been discovered yet, as happens sometimes when a person has drowned, or has been killed by a 'cat' (k'a, la,), the village priest will go out on his uncovered porch and call out to the villagers, "So-and-so has not come back yet. You'll have to go look. Look real well." It should be noted that the village priest does not say anything about the possibility of a 'terrible' death though of course this possibility is in everyone's mind. Also, the village priest will not go out with them, but will stay in the village while they search.

The men of the village go out and look for the person who was either drowned, or taken by a 'k'a, La,' When they find the body, they again inform the village priest and the family. This time the village priest goes out onto his porch again and calls out, "He's been found. Everyone come." Although there is still no mention of it being a 'terrible' death, the men of the village all understand that is what it is, and they go out with their mattocks and machetes to where the body is. Again the village priest does not go, but he will explain to them what to do, unless there are some elders in the group who already know what to do.

When they get to the body, first of all a member of the family of the one who has died a 'terrible' death must 'beat the body clean with leaves' (a pah neh jui shaw'—eu). For this he will take three small branches from any tree. If there is the 'magic vine' (meh) in the area this is probably the best. He will hold whatever branches he is using in his left hand, and beat the body with them three times. While doing this he says. "Even though there have been tens and hundreds of your ancestors who have never seen this 'terrible' death, it has happened to you." They say this, incidentally, even though there may have been several such deaths. Then they put a very little bit of gold in the mouth of the deceased, while saying, 'Never call out'.

In the case of those who die a 'good death' (nm shi' shi-eu), they put silver in their mouth, in order to buy things to eat on the way to the land of the ancestors. This gold seems more to be the price that must be paid to keep the 'spirit' (neh) of this dead person from calling out.

Then one of the members of the household of the deceased starts digging a grave just below (on the down- slope) the body. Whether his day is propitious or not, it must be a member of the household that does this. He does not throw the bit of scrap metal down first. Also they do not dig the grave very deep - just enough to keep the body from being dug up by dogs. For the moat part they do not make a coffin for this kind of death. Nor do they wrap a shroud around the body. If possible they do not even touch the body. If there are some relatives who are 'brave, they may put a set of new clothes on the body before it is buried. But if no one is that brave among them, they will, simply lay the new clothes on top of the grave after it has been filled in with dirt. When the grave is deep enough, they will use sticks and push and drag the body into the grave, and then quickly fill in the dirt. At this point there is a slight difference. After some dirt has been thrown in over the body, some of them (K—3, K-15) will kill a dog and throw it in at this point, and then throw more dirt in. Others (such as K-4, K-8, K-28, K-29) say that the grave must be filled up and the body of the dog thrown on top.

When killing the dog they say, “We’re killing a dog for your ‘terrible’ death”. Along with the body of the dog, they also put some items on the top of the grave that have to do with their weaving. These items along with the gold placed in the mouth, are to help keep the ‘spirit’ (neh) of this death from calling out or groaning. There are nine strands of the type of plant (a leh, ba) that they use in making a device used in weaving cloth (seh), and nine strings from another part (neh), which are left on the grave.

Also, on top of the grave they put three stones in a triangular shape. They then put three sticks between them, as when building a fire, and a clay cooking pot on it. In the cooking pot they put the red ‘blossom’ from a banana tree. This is to take place of the wooden rice steamer (haw, sa, bah). Then they light the sticks that are under the pot and say, “We’re cooking rice for you” (Haw, oe, dah neh, nya de.) The fire does not burn very long, usually, which is all right. They do not really cook anything in the pot. Some Akhas just put one rock on the grave, and no pot or firewood.

When they have finished with the above, and are getting ready to leave, one elder will recount the genealogy of the dead person. In some places, while he does this he has one foot (either one) on the grave. Others just stand near the grave. After he has recounted the genealogy, he begins to ‘teach’ the dead person. He usually has quite a bit to say. The theme is, “This rice steamer does not call out - don’t you. As these rocks are stationary (ma lu) you be stationary to. Even though the earth might quake (mi lu). don’t you quake. Don’t call out or moan at all. Let this be the last time we see you. Don’t show yourself at all. Just go on the path, and don’t look back. Sleep well.’

After he has said “sleep well”, he stamps on the grave with his left foot three times, though some say that he stamps with either foot once. Then he turns around, and he and those who went to bury the person, return directly to the village. As they return, there are three places. they must perform the ‘follow—me-not ceremony’ (meh gu gu-eu). The first place is as they leave the spot where they buried the body. The first one in line will pluck three branches of ‘magic vine’ (meh) and lay them down so that they are across the path they are taking. Then he steps over that and proceeds to the village, and all. of the others following him also step over it. After the last one in line has stepped over it, while holding his machete behind him, he cuts nine lines across the path.

About halfway back they will stop, and the first one in line will once again fix three branches of ‘magic vine’ across the path, but this time he will kill a puppy and lay it on the middle branch. Again they all step over it, and again the last in line makes the nine lines across the path behind him. When they get to the village gate, they again have the three branches of ‘magic vine’, with a small chicken that has been killed laid on the middle one. The last one in line does not make the marks with his machete at this place. Instead, he makes a ‘bamboo star’ (da’ leh), and sticks it in the ground.

When they get back to the village, they go to the home of the deceased. There they have a special ceremony (sha yah law-eu). For this they kill a big dog. They mix the dog meat with blue squash (tah k’o) and cook a curry for the ones who helped bury the body, plus the elders of the village. Since they eat this combination of blue squash and dog meat at this time, they must never eat them mixed together at any other time. When this meal is finished, everyone returns home. The fact that it ‘takes three dogs when there is a ‘terrible’ death” seems quite important to Akhas. I got this statement from several I talked with about it.

Although smallpox is also considered a ‘terrible’ death, it is handled a bit differently. In the first place, when smallpox breaks out in a village, Akhas are terrified. “It is worse than twins being born”, one person said. Not only do they string ‘magic vine’ all the way around their village, they also put it around their necks, and even little bits of it on their heads.

The moment they know that a person is suffering from smallpox, they make those who have recovered from smallpox in the past and are immune, take the sick person outside the village area into the jungle. There they make little shelters (seh, g'aw") for them. K—25 told how when he was a boy it broke out in his village. He thinks there must have been 30 or 40 people who died of smallpox at that time. The elders sent word to Kengtung and got a vaccinator to come, "although it took a long time for him to get there". K—25 was vaccinated, along with a younger sister and others. Later the younger sister broke out with smallpox and died. K—25 felt it was because of the vaccination.

When one of those suffering from smallpox dies, those who are immune must bury them. They are quite careful in choosing the site for burying such people. They must choose a place where the wind will not 'blow the disease' to the village. Also, it must not be in such a location that the village is in a direct line between the place where smallpox victims and 'good deaths' are buried in the village burial ground. This would be very bad for the village. For the actual burial they do not seem to kill a dog or do much of anything besides digging a hole and throwing the body in. One person described it as 'like burying an animal'. Others said that they sometimes did not even bother to dig graves — especially when there were many who were dying of smallpox. They do not go back to the home of the person who died of smallpox to get anything for the burial, since there is to be as little traffic as possible between the 'smallpox camp' in the jungle and the village.

In the case of a person dying a violent death in the jungle, or any kind of unnatural death outside of his village, apart from the three explained above, they must 'get rid of the terrible death' (sha dzeh dzeh-eu), before they can bring the body back to the village. X-28 described this quite vividly as they did it when he was a young man, and there were two men who both were shot by their own guns as they were pulling them along with the muzzle end to them. K—28 felt that the 'spirit owner' (yaw sah') of the guns did it.

K-28 said that in both cases, which happened within a few years of each other, an elder who knew the customs well, did the following. He first took a very small chicken and killed it. Then he had a banana leaf with some husked rice (ceh py'u') and broken rice (ceh gui) in it. (ceh gui ceh cu). He opened the leaf up, took out some of the mixture inside, and threw it to the east three times. While throwing it he said, "The powerful spirit (neh) of the east has brought about a tragedy' (u, ca). We beg the powerful spirit not to do this."

Then he plucked out some feathers from the chicken which he killed, and while throwing the feather in the west he said, "The 'spirit' (neh,) of the west has come to eat people's meat. I'm feeding you some chicken meat. Don't eat people's meat." They then left the chicken and leaf there, and carried the body home. Some say there is more 'purification ceremony' (m' shaw"—eu) that a spirit priest must perform before this type of corpse can be buried with others. They need three chickens for this, and much 'spirit incantation'. About a year after there has been a 'terrible' (sham) death in a home, which includes 'human rejects', they have a special ceremony (sha ha da eu). This is to insure that there will be no more 'terrible deaths' or human rejects in that house. They call a spirit priest for this ceremony. The first part he does in the house. He kills a pig and two chickens (one rooster and one hen), and puts them in front of the ancestor shrine on a winnowing tray while he repeats spirit incantation. The theme is, "Don't let any other 'terrible death' occur in this family. Let them prosper." Then the meat is cooked, and along with rice the members of the household serve it to the spirit priest and the elders of the village.

Next, the spirit priest goes outside of the house, on the ground just by the stairs. There he kills a male goat and a sow. Then he has these cooked. In the meant time his helpers have fixed him a 'five dish' winnowing tray of; cooked sticky rice, a mixture of meat from the goat and sow, liquor, tea, and water.

He then takes a little from each dish and drops it to the east three times while he says, God of the east Ha sah sah dui, don't ever let this tragedy occur again. Don't ever let us see anything like it again." Then he drops (la ka eu) the items from each dish three times to the west, but this time he does not say anything. What he said before suffices for this too.

After a 'human reject' birth the mother and father cannot start sleeping together until after this ceremony has been held. If they should sleep together before this ceremony is held, they "will have bad luck, be hard up, and won't be able to make any money in trading". After this ceremony the woman can again put on her head dress. They can get water at the same water source as others in some villages. Also, they can start visiting in other people's homes, and other people can visit in their home again. And they can start talking with other people, for the first time in one year.

When the widow of a man who has died a 'terrible' death, of the kind that cannot be buried in the village graveyard, dies and is buried, she must be buried as a man (pah, zaw da-eu). They bury her in men's clothes, and recount her genealogy as a man. From then on her name will be read' in the genealogy rather than her husband. Of course, if she dies before her husband, she would never be buried in men's clothes, but her name would still be the one included in the genealogy if her husband had died a 'terrible' death.

When a person is accidentally shot in the jungle because he "looks like a barking deer" or other game, they believe that spirits caused the person to look like that (sha, mu mu eu). They must have a special kind of ceremony for this person. K-29 was a young man in his village when he saw this happen with a youth who was over 20 years of age named A teu, who shot a boy who was about 18, and had just gotten married. A teu said that the boy looked Just like a barking deer, so he shot him. A teu was not fined or reprimanded in any way, since this was an act of the spirits over which he had no control.

They first of all had to drive away the terrible death spirit (sham dzeh dzeh-eu) from the body of the boy in the jungle where he was killed. Then they carried him back to the village. When they got back to the village gate and made the 'follow—me—not' symbols there, they killed a white chicken and laid it on the middle branch of the magic vine, and then everyone stepped over it (meh gu, k'ah dzeu-eu). The one who made it said, "We're making a block for the spirits. Spirits, don't follow us" When they got near the house with the body, those in the house killed a small chicken with a stick, and then put the stick they used and the dead chicken on the ground by the steps leading up to the house. When they carried the body into the house (K-29 helped), they all had to step over that before going up the steps. Although I am not sure, I believe they do this for all 'terrible' deaths in which, after the ritual (sham dzeh dzeh-eu) they bring the body back to the village.

On the day that the person who died of the 'accidental' shooting, was to be buried, K-29 told of going with the village priest, a few elders, and most of the young men of the village down to a stream. Of the ritual they performed there (mae dza. za-eu), the main part consisted of taking a puppy and a small pig, and drowning them. The village priest had one animal, and a non—relative of the deceased had the other. As they both pushed the heads of the animals in together. the village priest said, Don't ever call out. Don't ever let us meet this again. We do the 'ma dza, za ceremony."

If they can drown the two animals without their making any sound, then the man who died will not 'call out' (mah la') from his 'terrible death'. Otherwise, he will call out in the same way he did when he died. For example, if he said, A na.-i" when he died, then the 'terrible death spirit' (sha) will call out, a na i from time to time. Or if he groaned as he died, then he will continue to groan. P-2 P-3 K-2, and many others assure me they have heard such groans from sha. In the above case K-29 said the puppy and pig did not groan, so he was quite sure the sha did not groan either.

When a woman dies in childbirth it is a terrible thing to Akhas. They first of all call the village priest, who will try to get the dead woman to deliver the child through the use of magic. He first goes to the home where the body is, and takes his left arm out of his jacket. and then drapes his jacket over that shoulder, keeping his right arm in his jacket sleeve. Since this is done only by the village priest, and in this type of situation, children must not wear their jackets in this way.

The village priest then goes alone up to the village playground, while the rest of the villagers keep very quiet in their homes. They are all very frightened since this is a 'human reject' birth if the child cannot be gotten out of the mother's womb before she is buried. Then the village priest chants to the mother who has died in childbirth something like this, "You have certainly had bad luck not to give birth to this child. Though your luck was bad here, the village priest (speaking of himself) is working very hard to see that you might turn the bad luck into good and somehow get to 'God's' place." Then he goes back to the house, and tells the dead mother that he has chanted for her. After that he slaps her face real hard, and often the dead baby will come out of the dead mother when he does that. If it does not come out, the men of the village get a bamboo, and with one man on each side they bear down on the abdomen to force the child's head out enough so that they can pull it all the way out.

Maw boe (k-2), has seen his father, who is a village priest, do the above mentioned magical rite. He was young at the time, so cannot remember for sure whether the child came out or not. But he said, "I'm sure it must have come out, since a man who is such a good village priest as my father would do this just right, and it is a fool-proof system for getting the child to come out". When K-28 and K-29 heard of this magic rite, though they had never seen it themselves they recognized it as an 'authentic' system. During the time X-28 was village priest, a period of 13 years, he did not run into this problem. But I had the feeling from what he said that he thought he would have been able to save the woman from dying in the first place, with magic and medicine.

If they cannot get the unborn child out of the mother's abdomen any other way, they will cut it out - at least if they can find anyone who is willing to do it. K-28 told of an Akha in a village near his that accepted 10 'ga' (K 22.50) from the family of the deceased to cut an unborn child from the mother's abdomen. But he said that even after the child was cut out, the shamar still had to do a great many 'purification rites' (m shaw-eu), and only rich people can do this. Later he said that the man who cut the unborn child out lived just a few months after he had done it. He mentioned this several times.

For those who do not get the child out of the womb of the mother, it must be considered as a 'human reject' birth, and the mother and father (even though the mother is dead), are known as parents of 'human rejects'. The father must go out into the jungle with an elder and go through the various rituals done at the time of the birth of twins. Also, Akhas believe very strongly that a woman buried with the unborn child within her will become a 'tigress' (k'a, la la, pyeu). Some say that before one cycle of days is past, from her burial that is, she will become a tigress, and start killing people and livestock in the village and nearby area. Others say she becomes a tigress only when her body has decayed.

K-29 told of two Akha women from his area being buried within a few months of each other in late 1940 and early 1941. They both became tigresses. and between them killed "over 50 people". He saw the remains of one person badly eaten by one of them. They were finally able to poison one, and shoot the other. K-2 told of another Akha village not far from K'm' bo where several years ago they buried a woman who was pregnant, but no one knew she was at the time. Right away she became a tigress and took lots of people. So they made a representation (maw kaw) of a person and shot it, thus killing her. Then they were all right. The tigress did not bother them again.

After they have taken the unborn child from the mother, which they are evidently able to do in most cases, they bury them in separate graves, but not in the regular burial grounds of the village. When the child is buried, there is no special ceremony. "since it was never named". For the mother, they must recount the genealogy of her husband. In most cases this is done by the husband himself.

If the woman who dies in childbirth is not married, or has left her husband and died in her father's house, they feel this is an even worse tragedy than the above. In this case they will not recount the genealogy. The funeral is very short. They want to get her buried as quickly as possible. Usually villagers will have to be paid to help with such a funeral, since they are afraid to go near. They believe that the women's brothers will have short lives if this occurs. If it is the case of an unmarried girl having a child, but the mother does not die, they call, this 'mah dzah lah k'eh-ah ca,—eu'. As they put it, "Such a child cannot be raised in an Akha village. In other words, they must kill it. The mother is the one who is expected to kill it.

Then there are various fines that must be paid, arid ceremonies that must be carried out. K-29 told of a girl who was pregnant, but did not tell, her parents. She had a miscarriage when the baby was about four or five months along. She herself took the child out into the jungle and buried it. But later a dog came dragging it into one of the houses of the village. K-29 agreed that such a child is a very strong 'spirit' (neh), and it will not stay in the grave no matter how deeply they bury it. It will always 'out'.

The man of the house where the dog brought the body went right to the village priest. The village priest then began to look for the mother. He finally came to this girl, who had been sick for several days. She said she had a fever. At first she denied that she had had the baby, but when they said, "All right, we'll look for blood on your skirts", she confessed that it was her child, and told them who the father was. First of all, the village priest and elders fined the parents of the girl a pig, for raising such a daughter". They killed the pig and provided a feast for the whole village, providing all of the rice and liquor too. The girl and the boy then had to give a big goat and one pair of chickens and one pig for the spirit priest to repeat spirit incantations at the village gate. This type of spirit incantation is a 'village protection' type (pu k'eh g'eh-eu).

The couple also had to provide two chickens and two pigs for spirit incantations they had in the house where the dog brought the body. Before the incantations were repeated, they had to have a feast for the spirit priest in that house (shi ne ti-eu). which meant one chicken and the rice which they had to provide. Furthermore, they had to 'purify' the girl's father's house by spirit incantations (to shaw-eu). For that the couple had to give two chickens and two pigs. For an 'outside offering' they had to give two chickens, one pig and one dog.

The body was then buried, without any special kind of ceremony. When it was buried that time, it would 'not come back out'. I believe they felt that since the sin' had been revealed and the guilty ones had been dealt with, the body would be at rest in the grave. When a child who is unnamed dies, the father, or some other close relative, will take it out and bury it. They will, often put the body in the bamboo section they use for collecting ashes (k'a leh da pa), although if they don't have that, they will take a bamboo section they use to carry water in (i bah) split it in half. and put the child in that. They do not tie this together, but they do wrap around it the binding cloth (bui lo) they had prepared for the child.

The person taking the child out to bury will take a digging tool (gah ceh) which they use for digging holes for posts and the like. He will find a remote spot where people do not often go to bury the child. However, it must not be in a place whereby it would make the village come between the burial ground and this grave.

He will not dig a very deep grave - just deep enough so that animals cannot dig it up. After they have put the body, still in the bamboo section, down into the hole and covered it back up with dirt, they take the metal part of the digging tool off of its handle, and leave the metal part on the grave. They just throw the handle into the jungle any place. Before leaving for home, the man and his friends (usually there are two or three men who go out to do this) will say a kind of formula. If anyone asks you who your parents are, tell them your mother is the bamboo, and your father the digging tool. (gah, ceh”).” On their way home, they perform the follow-me-not ceremony (meh gu, gu—eu).

When they get back to the house, they perform another ceremony (la mi shaw-eu). For that they kill a small chicken with a stick or piece of firewood, and then put both that stick and the dead chicken on the ground by the steps. Everyone who went to the ‘burial’ must step over that before entering the house. When they get back to the house, they kill the hen and rooster which the parents had been raising to kill at the time of the of the naming of the child. They make chicken curry and cook rice. When they are ready to eat, they prepare four ‘dishes’. One has five pieces of meat in it, one dish has liquor, one has tea, and one has holy rice’ (haw, shaw). The elder who is most honored will then take a string and kind of swing it over and through the dishes that are on the ‘rice table’ three times. The string will probably get into some of them. Some Akhas feel that the person doing it must see that the string gets dipped into each dish. Then the elder will tie the string around the wrist of the mother whose infant just died. As he ties it he will say something like this, Never mind. Later on your ‘luck—blessing’ will get bigger. It won’t be like this every time. Next time everything will be just fine. After tying the string to her wrist and saying the above, the elder dips his finger into each dish and then touches it to the mother’s lips - once for each dish. Following that they gather around the table and have a feast.

In the case of first child to die in a family (zap dzaw’ ga beh). there are certain precautions they must take in the burial so that the next children will live. First of all, they must bury this child only in white. Also, the clothes must all be turned inside out (peh po dm-eu). The mother must take the back part of her head dress off, and not wear it for a month. But they only do these things for the firstborn when it dies as an infant.

A difficult situation arises when an elder dies at the same time ‘human rejects’ are born in a village. K—28 saw this happen many years ago when his grandfather died. On the very same day there was a ‘human reject’ birth in the village (twins that time). Therefore it was not ‘right’ for a spirit priest to come to the village to repeat spirit incantations, and to ‘offer a buffalo’ (a nyo ya-eu). The way they offered the buffalo was described by K-28 who went along. He said that several elders went out into the jungle to a buffalo that they had. While one of the elders walked up toward the buffalo he spilled some liquor and said, “Elder, your sons and grandsons give you this buffalo. Take and eat it.” After that the buffalo disappeared, K—28 said. ‘Whether the spirits carried it off or what we don’t know.’ They also killed a buffalo back at the house and ate it, but they did not consider that as offering it to the grandfather.

If two people from the same household die on the same day, or within a cycle of days of each other (maw dzm ga la—eu), it is considered to be very serious. They must call a good spirit priest who will be sure to know how to handle such a double death. When the coffins are made, they must be made from the same tree, with the first one to have died being buried in the lower section. I asked K-28 and K-29 what would happen if the tree they cut down was not long enough to make a coffin for the second one. They said there was no problem. if they took some of the bark or wood from the tree that was used to make the first coffin and kind of wedged it in someplace in the second coffin, they could cut, down a different tree. As for the burial proper, each has his own grave, but they are near each other.

When all males in a family die, without any mates to carry on the line (shm byeh, byeh-eu), Akhas are very much afraid. There are certain things when such a man (shm byeh) dies. First of all, there is very little that they do to 'prepare' the body, since people are afraid to touch him. They are afraid that this disease will spread to them". Members of the family must either do it. or they must pay someone to do it.

First of all they have to tear down the ancestor shrine. If there are relatives around, they must do it. If there are absolutely no relatives who can do it, the village priest will have to do it. First of all they cut down the little altar (oe coe ja baw pyeh_eu). Then they take down the bamboo that holds the paddy stalks, and put it with the other paraphernalia into the ancestor shrine basket, including a gong if they have one. They tie the little table used when they make the ancestor offering on top of the basket. The one who cut down the altar must be given one kyat, if it is not a relative.

Next, a relative)must start kicking out the wall at the end of the house, on the men's end (baw law). Once he has started, all of the men join him and they kick it down, and carry the body out of that. In the meantime, the wife is in the women's side of the house listening for this. When she hears them starting to carry the body out of the other end of the house she leaves by the women's door saying. I'm leaving you. Don't follow me. I'm going home to my 'male relatives' (a mah a da). Then she goes to the house of one of her relatives living in the village. She will stay with them until she remarries. Some say that for those who really know the Akha customs", when a man dies this type of death (shm byeh) his wife will not leave by the door. Some relatives or friends will make a hole for her in the wall at the women's end of the house, and she will go through that.

But if it is too difficult to arrange for a hole to be made, it is all right for her to leave through the door. As they carry the 'no-son person' (shm byeh) out, one of the relatives carries the ancestor shrine basket. As they get near the site for the burial, he will throw it away in the jungle. In the Loimwe and Meung Yawng areas, however, many of them put it on top of the grave after they have thrown the dirt in. They say that sometimes Shans or Mon-Khmer tribes people will take the basket, but Lahus, Lisus, and Chinese won't take it, since "they know what we are doing". When they get back to the village, they completely tear the house down.

They have various 'degrees' of 'no—son person' (shm' byeh,). If a married son with no children dies, but his father is still alive, they call him 'byeh sa', which makes clear that the father is still alive. When they bury him, they do not throw away the ancestor altar.

When there are three brothers, and the father is dead, and they are all married but have no male offspring and die the eldest is call nya byeh,'. They do not throw away the ancestor shrine as yet, since there are still two younger brother. But they must bury him, as all 'no-son persons', on the same day he dies. Also, they must have a very simple type of burial for him. They can have a 'buffalo offering' (a nyo ya-eu), but that also must be done in one day.

When the middle brother dies, they call him 'g'ah' byeh'. Everything about him is the same as above, except for one extra thing, "since he is the middle one". They must take a dog and a pig to the river and drown them (see above).

When the third brother dies, he is called 'gui byeh'. His burial is the same as when the eldest dies, except that if he is the last, and there is no living brother, the ancestor shrine must be taken out too.

If the 'no-son person' adopt a boy, and gives him the second part of his own name as the first part of the boy's, then the man is no longer a 'no—son person'. since there is a boy to carry on his name and line. For the adoption he will have to kill a pig, or if he is not well off at least a chicken. (See more in the section on adoption.)

The Akhas will call a spirit priest when a person dies who has gone insane. The spirit priest will have to 'purify' (m shaw-eu) the body before it can be buried with other people. The way he does it is to take a puppy to a swampy area out in the jungle. Then, while holding the snout of the puppy tightly shut, he forces the puppy, snout first, right down into the mud. While he is doing this he repeats a formula which will keep the puppy from crying, and then repeats the formula to the dead person to keep his 'spirit' (neh) from crying out. When the puppy has quit struggling, the spirit priest covers the body over with some mud and leaves it there, No one must go to that spot for one year. "We don't want to go there either", K—28 and K—29 said. After this has been done, the man who died insane can be buried with others.

For those who die of leprosy, the Akhas disagree as to the burial. One reason for this is that there are so very few Akhas who contract the disease. Another reason is that once a person has the disease, Akhas don't allow him to stay in the village. K-24 felt that since Akhas lived and died in a 'purified' way in accordance with their Akha religion, they do not get this disease. He only knew of two Akhas who ever had the disease. As to the burial of those who do have leprosy, the general feeling seems to be that if it occurred, the relatives of the deceased would have to see to it, or pay Lahus or Shans to take care of it. K-24 thought that maybe one dog had to be buried with the person, but he was not at all sure.

When a body of a dead person is being kept in a house at a time when there is an eclipse of the moon, there is something that an elder must do to keep the body from getting up. He will take a chicken, and after ceremonial sprinkling it, kills it. He cooks the chicken, and then makes the following four 'dishes'; one dish with a little meat from each 'part of the body' (a seh"), one dish of liquor, one dish of 'holy rice', and one dish of tea. He then spills these near the corpse as he says. I feed the sun and moon. Never you mind. Don't get up, don't move. Just stay right here." Akhas say that since the Shans don't know how to do this, they have to bury the corpse right away before there can be an eclipse of the moon. They also told of two prominent Shans who got up and walked around during the eclipse of a moon after they had been prepared for burial.

If someone dies in a battle, either as a participant or as one caught in the cross fire, they make a wooden 'spear' (gah bo gah tsi);The handle has red stripes painted around it in a spiral. They lay this on the grave, with the 'point' toward the feet of the Corpse. I have not met anyone who has actually done or seen this, but I have been assured by several that it is the proper' way to handle such a death, and has been handed down to them by their ancestors.

When animals die, there are some Akhas who eat the meat, but most of them don't. Their customs state very clearly that when they bury animals, the heads must face to the east. There is something special they will do when the sow dies who has been the 'mother' (za ma je dzah, or, za ma dzoe dzah) of their pigs. They will put money into the sow's mouth to 'share back' some of the profits they are getting from all, of her offspring. They may put anywhere from 20 pyas to 5 kkyat or so, depending on the owner.

They also do this when a buffalo cow dies who has been the 'mother' (nyo ma je dzah') of the herd. Since it is difficult to dig a hole in which to bury the buffalo, they will just dig up three scoops of dirt and put on her side, and leave her that way in the jungle. With the 'mother' sow they will sometimes dig a hole and put her in it.

SOCIAL READJUSTMENTS TO DEATH

No one must sleep in the sleeping place of an elder until at least five months after his burial. Among the A jaw', at least, they consider it best to build a new house after the father dies, any time between five and twelve months after the burial. This does not apply to when the mother dies.

If when a man dies his widow and children are very hard up, relatives must look after them. If there are no relatives, then the villagers must look after them. They say that after a person has died, and before he has been buried, everyone in the household must be very careful not to be injured by anything. For example, if they were to have some kind of a stab from a stick, then they would become leprous, they believe. Also, it is hard to heal the kind of wound they would get at such a time.

What they do if they get a machete or axe wound at that time is to 'beg' the person who died for some medicine. To do this they take a dish with a little water in it to the corpse and say to him, I am going to put some of my medicine on this cut. You give me some medicine too, so that I can put them on together. Then he goes back and pours the water on the cut, and also puts on his own 'medicine' (ja g'a).

If the person who died had died a 'terrible death' (sha shi'), however, they would not do this. For rather than getting help, the person who died the 'terrible death' would try to 'suck their blood' (cu dza-eu). In order to keep this from happening there are two things they can do; one is to take a leaf, repeat spirit incantations over it, and then drive the spirit (neh teh-eu) out of the person who died the terrible death out of the person who got the injury. The second is to make 'offerings' (ka'da ci—eu) of nine things to the spirit of the one who died a terrible death.

K-29 told of some women who were getting pitch pine at a place where a man who shot a bear was killed by the bear, thus dying a 'terrible death'. One woman pricked herself, but when the people came looking for her a short time later, she had already bled to death.

If they really follow the Akha customs, when a dies, any boys left will be turned over to the late father's brothers. It is up to the mother what becomes of any girls. But not everyone follows this 'custom'. When K-2's father died, for example, his mother continued to raise him, even when she re-married. K-2 should have been in a 'taboo relationship' (zah do) to his stepfather, and not even spoken to him. But these customs were ignored.

On the other hand, a man from Nawng Tao area was raised in accordance with the Akha customs. Before he was born, his father died. He was raised by his father's relatives after he was weaned.

CULT OF THE DEAD

Akhas must be very careful not to let the grave site burn. If the villagers see that the jungle is growing up badly in the area of the grave site, they tell the village priest. He will, go out on his porch and call out something like this. Don't let the fire burn. Tomorrow everyone will 90 and fix the grave yard, so it will not burn. They do not have to do this very often. There are usually cattle and other animals that keep the grass down, since it is not taboo for them to graze there. In the 13 years that K—28 was village priest, he only had to do this once. The villagers must also not cut down any trees right around the graveyard. This is 'wronging' the graveyard, and they must make it right if they do this. If they 'wrong' the graveyard, or if it should burn, the village priest must go, with the elders, up to the grave site. They will take a pig with them. After ceremonially sprinkling the pig, the village priest will kill the pig, along with a chicken. They must be of opposite sex.

He then burns a little spot on each - just enough so that he can get off some hair or feathers (the same word in Akha, ca hm). He throws that into the fire while saying, "Well, it burned. We are offering this to you (plural)." Then the men with him cook both kinds of meat into curry, as well as cooking some rice to eat along with it. When the meat is done, the village priest takes some meat from the head, foreleg, breast (or chest if it is the pig), back leg (thigh of the chicken), and tail of both animals. He fixes these in one dish. He also prepares a dish each of; cooked rice, liquor, tea, and water.

While dropping some of the rice (tsi ka-eu) near the grave of the first person buried there (lm bym sha beh), he says, "Here, we offer your (plural) village these things. Don't let there be poverty and sickness in your (plural) village. Watch over those of us who live." While he is saying this, he is also pinching off some of the meat and throwing it down near the grave and pouring some of the liquids onto the ground.

K-28 had to do this ceremony only once. At that time, there was lots of sickness in the village, and tigers were taking their livestock. As village priest, he felt responsible for seeing that this was corrected. So he went to a Shan 'seer' ja maw maw—eu) in Meu ha. He gave the seer one old coin, and asked him to look and see what was wrong with his village. The Shan said, "Oh, this is not a matter of spirits afflicting. Someone has cut down a tree near the village graveyard." K—28 went back, and sure enough, four or five days back a tree had been cut there.

So he began asking who had done it, but everyone denied doing it. Someone said he had seen Ci" gaw going out with his axe in that general direction, so they asked him. "I didn't cut it down", he said. So they asked him to point out the tree he did cut down — and he couldn't. So they knew it was him, and made him give the pig and chicken for the ceremony. Ci" gaw was too embarrassed to go when they had the ceremony, although he had to provide the pig and chicken.

K-28 went on to say that something "more than my fine happened to him". I asked him what that was. He said that just a year ago (1965) some Burmese soldiers went up to that village, and Ci gaw was the one chosen to take them to where the insurgents were. As a result of this, two days later, after the soldiers had left, the insurgents returned and said, "Who was the man who led the soldiers to our hideout?" When they found it was Ci gay, they killed him before the villagers.

The village priest of a village hardly ever goes to the graveyard of the village, since he might be afflicted by spirits there. If that happened, it would be hard on the whole village. Of course, when the above mentioned ceremony is carried out, he must do it. Also, when the villagers move to a new site, the first person to be buried there (lm bym sha beh) must be accompanied by the village priest when his body is carried up to be buried. From then on that first person buried there is considered to be the 'spirit village priest (neh dzoe ma). This corresponds to the fact that they build the village priest's house first when they build a new village. For some reason, they also leave a wooden rice steamer (haw sa bah) at the grave of the first person who dies and is buried there, but at none of the other graves.