

record-keeping ; animal husbandry
and for the women, nutrition
cooking & crafts (such as weaving).

Fields are worked collectively,
and each family also has their
own vegetable plot. An important
part of the curriculum is
animal traction. The farmers
are taught to ~~use~~ train & use
oxen & attachments for working
their fields. After their 2 year
stay, they receive ~~a~~ one oxen
& the attachments as a "gift".

The priests had invited
Mike & Rob out to do a stove
formation, so I tagged along.
All 25 families were there.
Mike & Rob built a demon-
stration stove, then each
family built 1 or 2 stoves
at their house. They were
very enthusiastic, and caught
on fast. The finished stoves
were varied, creative, and
correctly made. It was
amazing to stand at the
center of the compound, look
around, and see nearly
50 stoves being made
simultaneously! (cont'd. after)

[] - 5 pages

[This morning, Thurs June 12, Adia's grandmother, his mother's mother, died quite unexpectedly.

She was old (probably about 80, judging from the ages of her children & grandchildren - though most everyone you ask, including Adia, will say she was over 100! Makes me wonder about all the other old folks who claim to be 100 or so. Adia must know that she wasn't anywhere near 100. Yet when the Dir. of the Dapaong hospital today asked how old she was, he replied patly: "she was 102"!) It seems she was bit by a scorpion several days ago, but noone noticed she was feeling unwell.

Adia came to tell me, and asked if I would drive him into Dapaong to telephone the proprietaire, and his brother in Para. En route, we stopped at her house ~~to~~ so Adia could check ~~things~~^{things out.} He was in top form. As she had no living sons, of all the close relations present, he was the senior male so to speak, and thus

responsible for logistical details
& organization. These are both, of
course, his forté. His datebook
in hand, we made a quick
reconnaissance of the situation, ^{as if}
he were ~~playing~~ the general, checking
in at headquarters.

The old woman lived in a
small mud concession with a
grandson. Perched on a terrace
below the cliffs east of us,
the view is sweeping. Clouds
lent depth to the sky, and the
valley appears ~~to~~ to drop out
below the house, then ~~to~~ gently
rises across a boulder-strewn
slope before abutting the cliff
wall a km. or two across the
valley. Several older woman
bustled about quietly, cleaning
& arranging the house & yard. She
lay on her sleeping mat in
her small, round room, a
genier usurping its center.
Covered with a pagne, she lay
curled, her face to the wall,
as if sleeping. I expected
to see her breath raise the
cloth any moment.

In Opaong we telephoned the proprietare then hurried back. By now there were several dozen people milling about the yard, presided over by many of the old men, well-installed in ^{quiet} clusters in the shade. I couldn't help wondering if they were dwelling more than usual on their own impending mortality.

The Director had said he couldn't come up, but in late afternoon his forest green sedan lumbered up to the gate. The faint sound of drums & women wailing echoed across the valley.

Oh - on the second visit to the house, mom was there, and I went to say hello. She was in the room with a cluster of wailing women. Her mom lay by now on a metal bed & mattress (borrowed from our storeroom). She came out with swollen eyes, and a very sad face. I gave her a hug, not knowing what else to do, and because it felt right. Who knows what

anyone thought.

Near sunset Mike & I put on our "village best" and started off across the valley, only to see, halfway there, that the burial procession had already left, and was way ahead of us. So Mike hightailed it back for the moto, and we arrived at the marché just as the procession did.

The old woman had been wrapped in a multitude of pagnes, then sturdily lashed to a series of 4 long poles.

2 young men carried her, held high above their heads, bouncing & swaying. Someone twirled a black parasol near her, and all around was a throng of celebrants, well-laced with tchakbalo, singing, dancing, whooping, & laughing. It was quite a festive mood. The death of an old person is supposed to be a cause for celebration, though of course there were many sad people. The cemetery, which we'd never seen before, is a

jumble of intact & crumbling
clay jars marking traditional
graves, and a few "western-
style" cement-topped graves.

The traditional grave is
an underground, genie-shaped
hole, the access hole perhaps
2 feet in diameter. Only a few
people know how to dig them.

Thus, a small, round hole is
dug about $\frac{1}{2}$ a meter deep,
then flared out underground,
to create an egg-shaped hole
about $1\frac{1}{2}$ meters deep.

During the procession,
the body was bounced and
swayed high over the carrier's
heads. Occasionally they would
stop and lower the body to
the ground. The crowd would
gather around tightly, chanting
loudly. I was told the
body was being "hidden"
from evil spirits? I imagine
a dead body en route to
its burial is especially
vulnerable to wandering
spirits, and in need of
protection by surrounding
living bodies!

We arrived at the grave site and the body was promenaded several times around the hole.

The crowd, clumsy & aggressive with drink, pressed in closely, pushing & shoving. The body was lowered to the ground and amid much raucous inconsideration on the part of the crowd, ~~at~~ the layers of pagnes were removed one by one and handed to several women. The old woman was left in a flimsy white wrapping that gaped open up the front and was laced loosely to prevent its falling off completely. An old man, the official burier (and grave digger?) stood in the ~~hole~~, his head & shoulders above ground. The old woman was lowered feet first into his arms & down the hole. I'd never seen a dead body before, but unlike a white person, who must turn a ghostly hue of pale blue, the old woman remained a healthy chocolate brown,

the skin, perhaps lacking some of its previous lustre. She was limp, still, and had been

scrubbed down 4 times, so I'm told. Her nostrils had been plugged with kapok cotton, her eyes were closed, and her mouth hung open, her jaw slack, her lips the only bluish skin.

Once in the hole, she was curled up in a fetal position, her hands under her head as if sleeping, facing the sunset (as a woman's task is to prepare the evening meal after the family has worked all day - a man is buried facing the sunset, as ~~he~~ he must rise early each morning to work in his fields.)

The burier climbed out and one of the woman's old male relatives climbed in to check & make sure she was properly placed. (None of the woman's children were allowed to be present, in this case because the deceased had had twins. I don't