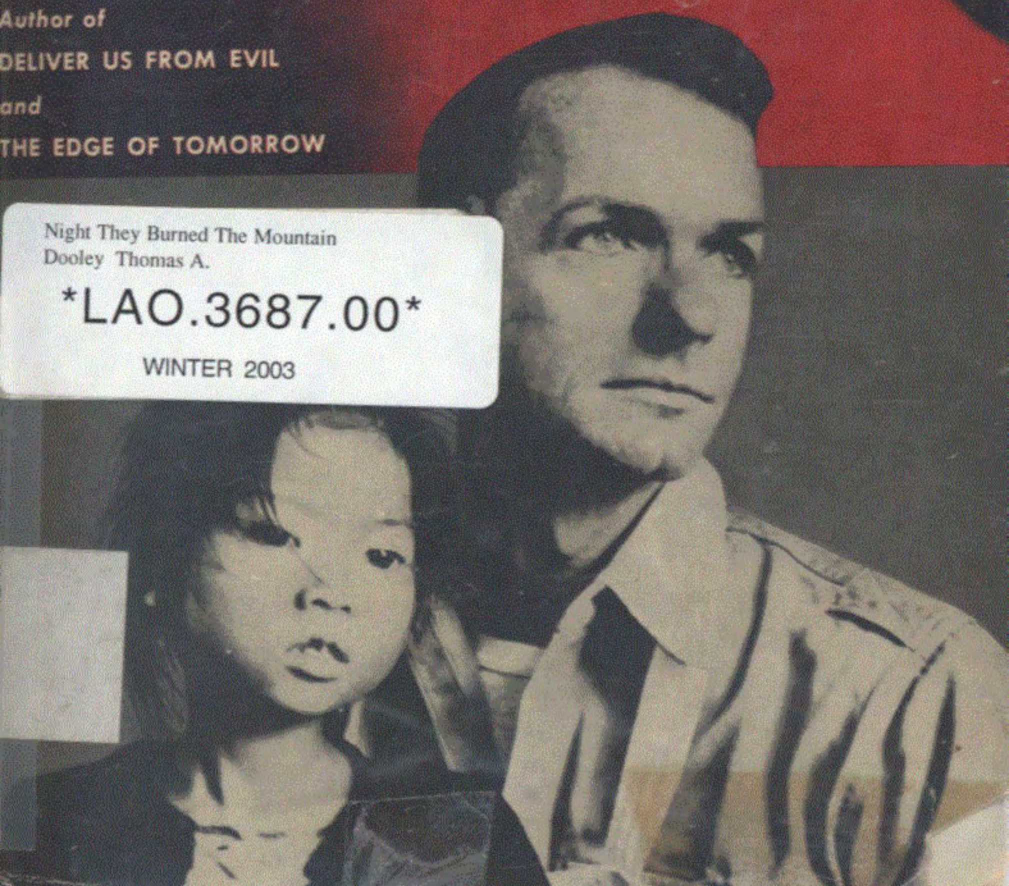
THOMAS A. DOOLEY, M.D.

The Night They Burned the Mountain

Author of
DELIVER US FROM EVIL
and
THE EDGE OF TOMORROW



Night They Burned The Mountain
Dooley Thomas A.
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THOMAS A. DOOLEY, M.D.

The Night They Burned the Mountain

Illustrated with photographs by Erica Anderson

The saga of Doctor Tom Dooley—"the Splendid American," as he has been called—continues to grow as a national legend. *The Night They Burned the Mountain* is the latest installment of his inspirational story of healing the sick in remote and primitive lands beyond the reach of modern medicine.

After establishing a hospital in Laos, in the village of Nam Tha, Dr. Dooley turned it over to natives whom he had trained to carry on. He then returned to America to help in launching MEDICO, a non-profit organization which raises money to send doctors and medical help to underdeveloped countries. Having done this, Dr. Dooley returned to Laos again to found another hospital, the subject of this book.

The new scene of activity is the village of Muong Sing in the northwest corner of Laos. Not far from Nam Tha as the crow flies (but a day's journey away by land), Muong Sing is situated on the western side of an 8,000-foot mountain about six miles from Red China. With two new American volunteers, Earl Rhine and Dwight Davis of Austin, Texas, Dr. Dooley relieved disease and suffering among the natives, who have their own

(continued on back flap)

THE NIGHT THEY BURNED THE MOUNTAIN

Books by Dr. Dooley

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

THE EDGE OF TOMORROW

THE NIGHT THEY BURNED THE MOUNTAIN

DOCTOR TOM DOOLEY, MY STORY (*juvenile*)

Thomas A. Dooley, M.D.

THE NIGHT THEY BURNED THE MOUNTAIN

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TO MY MOTHER

with deep gratitude for giving me her tender love as a shield against life's winds and storms.

TO DWIGHT DAVIS AND EARL RHINE

with whom I've shared joys and worries, disappointments and quiet triumphs in the fog-shrouded valley of Muong Sing.

The author wishes to express his thanks to Miss Erica Anderson for the use of her photographs. All but two of the pictures in the thirty-two page insert between pages 64 and 65 were taken by her.

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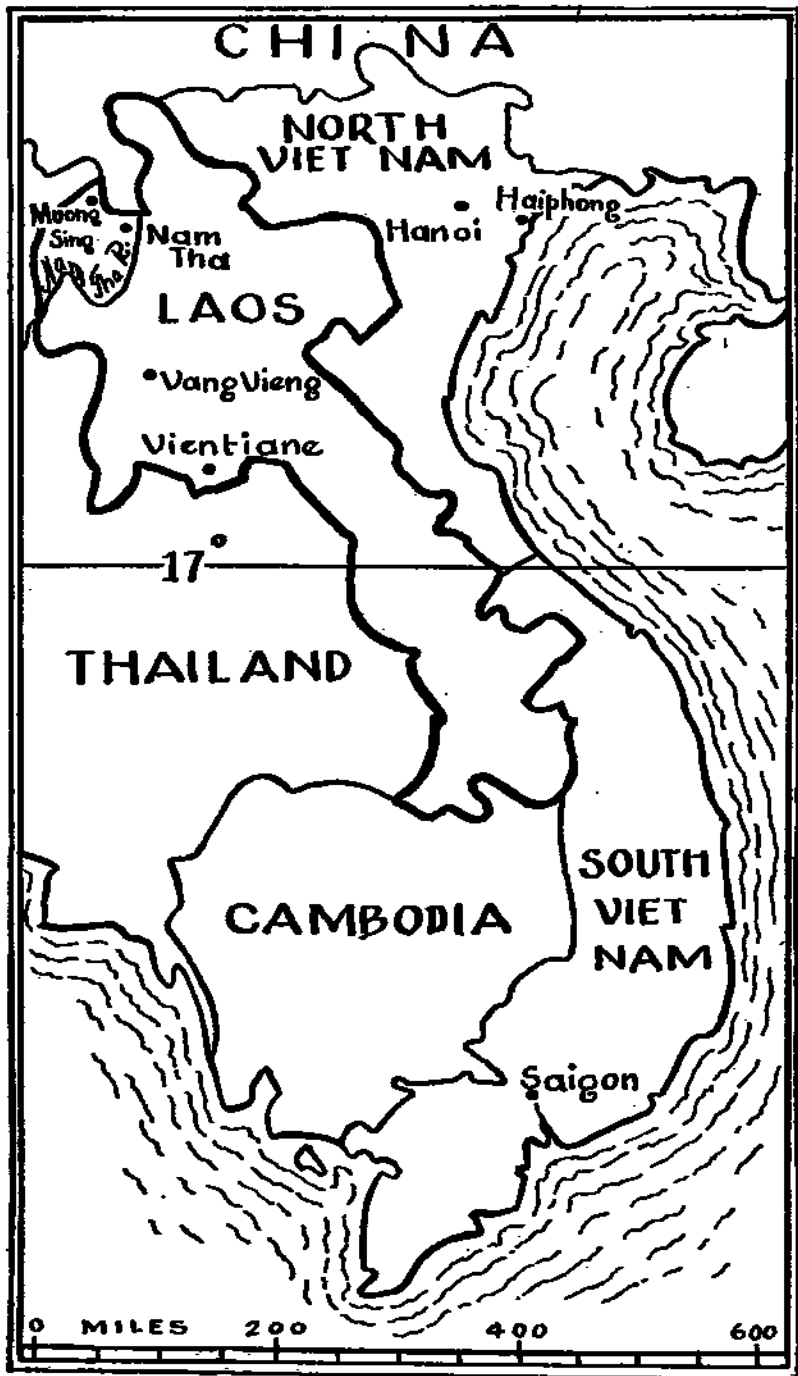
CHINA
NORTH VIET NAM
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Hanoi
Muong Sing
Nam Tha
LAOS
Vang Vieng
Vientiane
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THAILAND
CAMBODIA
SOUTH VIET NAM
Saigon
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ONE ·

BEFORE MY HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

It was a Saturday, at high noon, when the tired-looking Lao soldier came into my clinic in the little village of Muong Sing in northern Laos. He snapped to a slightly languid salute and said, "*Thanh Mo America, mi tayah.* Doctor America, you have a telegram."

What could this mean? Coming on the military radio, it must be about the war. My heart jumped a little and with a dry mouth I said, "*Ou he kai.* Give it to me."

He said that it was being held at the radio shack in the fortress, and I should accompany him there. I turned the line of patients over to Earl Rhine, one of my assistants, and walked out into the rain, across the road to the fortress.

There was war in Laos, and there were rumors of more war. Only four days before, the Voice of America had broadcast that over four thousand Red troops were in the two provinces of Sam Neua and Phong Saly. Other troops were massing on the Vietnamese side of the frontier and a new attack was expected. Would it spread to the China frontier? Would we be able to go on practising medicine much longer in this little village located at a point where Laos, China, and Burma meet?

In the mud radio-shack another Lao soldier thrust a flimsy,

crumpled sheet of blue paper into my hand. He said it had been forwarded from the Lao Army headquarters in the capital. He was sorry he was so many hours late in getting it to me but *"het punh,"* the war, you know. This limp piece of paper was to become a turning-point in my life. Noon, Saturday, August 15, in the year 1959.

My knees were shaking. I sat down on the wooden bench beside the radio operator, and smoothed out the thin blue paper on the table. I tried to make out the sentences. As the Lao language has no Roman letters, French is used in telegraph messages. Each letter of the telegram was in a box by itself. When I wrote out the message with its long introductory order to the local Commandant, the part addressed to me looked like this:

FROMPE TER COMAND URAS DOCTOR DOOLEY URGENT RETURN TOUS IMMEDIATELY

The message made no sense to me. I asked that it be retransmitted. The operator said that this would take hours, but I insisted. I went back to the clinic and showed the garbled words to the boys. Dwight Davis, my other assistant, took out a pencil and immediately divided the letters so that the sentence read in English as follows:

FROM PETER COMANDURAS: DOCTOR DOOLEY, URGENT RETURN TO U. S. IMMEDIATELY

How quickly Dwight grasped and understood that telegram —how strangely quick.

Suddenly the earth seemed to open up underneath me. Return to the U. S. now? I was intending to go in three months anyway. Why *now*? Had something happened to my mother? Had something bad happened to MEDICO? Had the Ambassador to Laos notified the State Department of

my refusal to leave and had they in turn requested Dr. Peter Comanduras, as chief of MEDICO, to order me out? Why didn't Peter explain himself? Why did he just say "Urgent, return to U. S.?" Didn't he know that we were involved in a war? Didn't he know that the wounded might start flowing into this hospital tomorrow? Didn't he know that the mountains of Laos were on fire? What could be so urgent that I must come home *now*, instead of when I was due to go home in a few months? Didn't Peter know that Laos was moving deeper and deeper into the shadows? This was not the time to abandon my work. Didn't he know what the Communists would say if I deserted my hospital? "A typical American reactionary imperialistic coward."

I had complete confidence in Doctor Peter Comanduras as Chief of MEDICO, but why was he ordering me out now, without explanation? He was living in the civilized world. I was living in the world beyond. More than mere miles separated us. How could he judge what must be done when he was not on the scene? It seemed to me that the sky was full of the sound of thunder. It seemed to me that the night was coming at high noon. "Urgent Doctor Dooley return to U. S. immediately." This meant that I must abandon my hospital, abandon all I had done, abandon all the work of the last year. "Urgent, return to U. S. immediately." The letters in that telegram stared up at me and stabbed my soul.

The things that I felt in my heart I said with my mouth. I asked all these questions of my two Texan assistants, Earl and Dwight. They offered no answers. They didn't even try to present anything good, except that Earl said, "Maybe you're going home to do a TV show," at which I growled back in anger.

The message had been sent by the Lao army. How did they get it? Why did Peter wire me through the Lao army?

Why didn't he send the telegram through the usual civilian channels? The army had filed it as TOP SECRET, URGENT. Had the message come so marked from America? How did it get to the Army in the first place? Was it sent to the Ambassador who requested the army to forward it to me? I was terribly concerned. My mind began to conjure up monstrous thoughts. Could it possibly have anything to do with the small tumor that Dr. Van Valin had cut off my chest? At once I banished that thought as sheer impossibility.

I decided that the wire must have something to do with the economic situation of MEDICO. It seemed to me that we were always on the brink of broke. I was going to have to go home and raise money. This infuriated me. Several times during the night I woke up suddenly, startled. I sat up in my bunk when thoughts came crowding to my mind. I did not sleep that night, nor the next night, nor for many nights to follow. By mid-week I had convinced myself that Dr. Comanduras had had a heart attack and that I was going to have to go and work at our MEDICO office. I, jungle physician, would have to sit at a desk in a New York office.

I sent a telegram down to Vientiane to Horace Smith, the American Ambassador, on Sunday. I asked him if he would please send up a plane to take me out. This was difficult to ask because only a few days before I had sent him a message pointing out that I was autonomous and that we could take care of ourselves despite the threat of war in our village. Now I had to reverse myself and ask him for his plane. I was sure the Ambassador knew about the New York telegram because I decided in my confused mind that the Lao government had received it from him.

No plane came Sunday, no plane came Monday, no plane came Tuesday. I felt as though I was tightly sealed in a coffin, my valley gray and grim. I walked around my village

and talked to the people to explain to them that I had to leave quickly. They could not understand. They asked if I was afraid of the war. I tried to explain to them why I must go home, though I did not know myself. How could I explain to other ears what my own heart did not know?

On Tuesday afternoon the horizon could only be seen in dim outline; the mountains were veiled in the mist. No plane could come in now. Soon black clouds would roll across the heavens again and we would be surrounded by the monsoon storm of wind and water. These were wild and gloomy times, wild and gloomy in the valley, wild and gloomy in my heart. Yet this dirty, barren, underdeveloped Asian village of stink and misery and wretchedness suddenly seemed warm and good and close. I did not want to leave it. I did not want to abandon it. I did not want to go to America now. I could feel the dampness of soggy sentimentalism taking hold of me.

I thought, "Now, Dooley, you've got a job, and it doesn't necessarily mean that you must stay in this village. You must go where you can do the greatest good." But deeper inside me a voice said, "Stay in your village, stay wrapped in the love of being needed. Here Asians need you and you need that need." I remembered the words of a Chinese philosopher who said that life was like a tightrope. On this tightrope man walks, balanced between what he must do and what he wishes to do. If these two remain in perfect balance, he can walk forward on the rope with ease. If they do not remain in balance, he falls down on one side or the other. I must keep walking, I must walk straight forward. I must.

Suddenly, while we were sitting at a very late lunch, we heard the unmistakable drone of a small twin-engine plane. We rushed out of the house and looked up. We could see no

hole in the murky clouds where the plane could pierce into our valley. I grabbed a small brief-case that I had packed and went out to the airstrip and waited. I could hear the plane as it circled and circled almost as though the fury of its engines would dispel the clouds. And they did, just as Chinese firecrackers dispel evil spirits. The Ambassador's small Beechcraft landed on our airstrip and out climbed my friend Bob Burns of USIS. There were no other passengers.

I asked Bob immediately if he knew what had happened, or why. He said, "All I know is that the Ambassador received a telegram from you saying you must leave immediately. He wishes to help and so he sent his plane. He told me to tell you that if you want to take your crew out, there is plenty of room on the plane. If you wish to leave your crew here, you must remember the immense responsibility that you place on them." "Who said that specifically?" I asked. He repeated, "The Ambassador himself." I was faced with another decision which I could not make alone. More fear.

I turned to Dwight and Earl and said, "Then this is your decision too, boys. You can get on this plane and leave with me, stay in the capital until we find out what this is all about, or you can stay here and continue to work alone." Without any hesitation they said, "Doctor, you go on, we will stay here and take care of things until you come back." I thanked God for men like mine. Yet involuntarily a hideous picture flashed in my mind—the impaled heads along the village airstrip which a French pilot had told me about. What if Earl and Dwight were captured by the Communists and beheaded as imperialistic Americans?

Dwight interrupted this ghastly thought by saying, "Do you want to take this, sir?" He held out a large crucifix given to me when I was made an honorary Oblate of Mary Immaculate. The Pope himself had blessed it and handed it to

me. I said, "Why should I take it with me now? You keep it here in my house where it belongs. I will be back real soon." Dwight was again being solicitous, kind and good—something which I did not at the time understand. Instead I was depressed, angry, and irritable.

The plane revved up its motors. As it took off, I looked back at two young men standing on the very rim of Red hell, under the threat of war. Surrounding them were my nurses and interpreters who had come out to the airfield to say goodbye to me, each with more sadness in his voice than I ever remembered at a normal departure. I did not understand this. At that time I did not know what it meant.

The plane slowly corkscrewed its way up to gain enough altitude to jump the rim of the mountain. I watched the boys below until the mist swirled around and I could no longer see them. In their hearts was the same great spirit that made people cross the plains of America years ago. It is the same spirit that can keep this world free for free men to live in.

The plane flew high towards the capital. I spoke to Bob Burns. In quick words I poured out my fear, my anguish, my concern. Why, why, why? Bob kept putting his hands on my shoulders and saying, "Now don't worry about it, doctor. Don't give it another thought; you are probably going to be on a TV show." I said, "If Peter ordered me out of Laos just to appear on some TV show, I would use adjectives on the network that would shut TV down forever. I mean it."

Bob just smiled, and tried to change the subject, without success. I kept vocalizing the fear in my heart, and took refuge in wordy violence.

The plane landed at Vientiane's military airport and a car was waiting to take me to the house of absent Hank Miller. There I changed my clothes. Hank was in Bangkok, his house was full of war correspondents, and I had no desire to talk to

anybody. Bob Burns told me the Ambassador had invited me to dinner so I cleaned up, put on my only suit, slightly mildewed, and walked to the Ambassador's house.

To my surprise I found that just the Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission and I were to have dinner. I discussed all my fears again. Each listened to me with the patience of a father. I did not know at that time that the Ambassador was fully aware of why I was going home to America. Bob Burns knew, Hank Miller knew, Earl, Dwight and all of my crew knew. The point was, Tom Dooley did not!

I told the Ambassador that I wanted to get to Bangkok as soon as possible in order to telephone to the United States and find out what this was all about. I said, "Maybe I won't have to go home. Maybe I can handle this whole thing over long-distance telephone for a couple of hundred dollars instead of spending fifteen hundred dollars for an around-the-world plane ticket."

The Ambassador said kindly, "Tom, go ahead home for a few weeks. If you fly jets you can go home, do what you have to do, and return quickly."

The next plane to Bangkok was at five the following evening and the Ambassador said, "My plane can take you down in the morning, it is going to be going down early, and we will be glad to make room for you." I thanked him and went back to Hank Miller's for the night. I did not sleep at all. At dawn I got up and walked along the edge of the river.

In the mist of early morning I went to Mass in the Catholic church of Vientiane. Once again I heard the same familiar words in Latin, "*Ad Deum qui laetificat*. To the altar of God I will go, to God who is the joy of my youth." These are the same words I have heard in the cathedrals of Paris, of

St. Louis, of Rome, and in the village chapels of Laos and Viet Nam. These same words in Latin had given me peace and solace when I was plunged into the hideousness and atrocity of Northern Viet Nam in 1954. These words had given me comfort in the strain and stress of medical school. These words had given me faith as a young man. *Why did they seem to give me little solace now?*

At eight o'clock the next morning I was at the airport once again, good Bob Burns acting as driver and friend. He put me on the Ambassador's plane and by nine-thirty we were winging our way across the emerald green paddies of the Korat plains of Thailand. Two hours later we landed at the sleek international airport at Bangkok. Some friends from the Thai airlines office met me and drove me to a hotel in town. I went immediately to the post-office building to place a phone call to America. I spent most of the afternoon trying to get a call through. *I had to get through, I had to find out—four days of not knowing was already taking its toll.* I had neither eaten a square meal nor held down much liquid; the agony of not knowing was the most terrible thing I had ever undergone.

My chest was sore from Dr. Van Valin's surgery. The fact that my whole shoulder ached must, I thought, have been due to the long flights.

By seven that evening it was obvious that I would not be able to get my phone call through, so I telephoned the airport and told them that it was urgent that I get to Hong Kong immediately. Although Hong Kong was not in the direct route to New York, it was only a six-hour flight and telephone connections out of Hong Kong are always good.

They said they could put me on a midnight plane. I took a taxi to the hotel where I put on the only white shirt I had

brought with me, and then went to a small restaurant that I liked in Bangkok.

After a miserable dinner there (it kept bouncing in my stomach) I asked the owner if I could play the piano. I frequently spent time there whenever I was in Bangkok and always played their piano. I tried to dissipate the tensions that were in me through the dexterity of my fingers and through the warmth of Chopin. However, Chopin did not seem to help, nor did Schumann, nor did anything which was soft and light and airy. I soon found myself playing the crashing chords of Rachmaninoff and the thundering opening of Tchaikowsky's concerto. After two hours of playing, some people who were sitting at a shadowy table in the corner came over within the circle of the light and said: "Hi, Tom, how are you?"

I looked up and saw the faces of my close friends, Hank Miller, and his wonderful wife, Annie. Never was I so glad to see friends as at that moment. I said I wanted to talk to them right away, I was so worried, so concerned. They said, "Don't worry, Tom; play something soft and light and lilting." I tried, but I could not make my fingers play like this. I hurt in my heart, in my shoulder, in my side. I was tired, I was sick, I was worried.

We went back to Hank's table and Hank looked at me and said, "Tom, I have never seen you in this state, even during wars, even during crisis. What's wrong?" I let flood out of my head and heart the things that had come to pass, the fear which existed because I did not know.

Hank looked at me and coolly said, "I know why you are going home. I will tell you, Tom." I leaned forward, took a deep breath and pleaded, "What's wrong, Hank?" My tension was at its peak. I thought I would burst. Slowly, deliberately, he said, "The tumor that Dr. Van Valin removed

has been diagnosed as a secondary stage of malignant melanoma."

I had no reaction. The words entered my head like a fist jammed into a pillow. I felt nothing. I neither felt elation at finding that MEDICO was not in a state of chaos, nor did I feel great dejection at finding out that I had a hideously malignant growth of cancer. It just seemed for a moment that all was quiet. All was tranquil for now. At last, I knew.

I knew? Yes, I knew, as a doctor, that malignant melanoma is one of the quickest killers of flesh and blood that is known in the history of cancer.

Looking back on that night, I do not remember much more. They drove me to the airport but I do not remember what we talked about. I only remember the warmth of Annie's goodbye embrace. I only remember the strength and warmth of Hank's handclasp and his words as I climbed the plane ramp, "We'll see you soon, Tom."

On the plane the reading lights blinked out and once again I was the sleepless traveler. By dawn the plane was in Hong Kong. Listlessly I went through Customs, took a cab and checked into a hotel. I did not want to see anybody. There was nothing that I wanted to do. No need to telephone now. I might as well get the fastest plane home.

At three p.m. on Wednesday I took a jet plane headed for London. On the plane I did a great deal of thinking. Somewhere the thought came, "Blessed are they that *mourn.*" But there must be no black pit of melancholy, no inertness, no fog, no void. I had much to do. Now there was a new urgency.

How did this cancer come about? I had always thought the months of aching and pain in my right shoulder and chest wall were due to my fall down an embankment on my

last river trip. A few weeks after the fall a small lump had grown on the side of my chest wall, but I thought it was just a cyst.

When I weighed myself on the scales at the Hong Kong airport, I found that I had lost over 30 pounds. I thought, "Is my life gutted?" I tried to think with detachment; I tried to think objectively about illness and cancer, but I am a miser of life. All I could think about was the statistic I had studied in med school, "Only about 50 percent of the people who have a malignant melanoma in the metastatic (second stage) survive a year. Less than 30 percent live two years." Yet I knew I was not going to abandon what I think is the correct thing to do in life because of shadows on a page. Nor was I going to quit this living, loving passion for life that I possess simply because of a statistic. I was not abandoning the beauty and tenderness that man can give to man, just for a statistic.

Memories surged into my mind and blocked out words, memories of my villagers and their needs. Memories of the fetid pestilence and decay of the refugee camps of Haiphong. Memories of the red humid heat of Vang Vieng. Memories of the oppressive sick call at the Nam Tha hospital.

I realized that I had become more aware of myself and my soul's adventure in the raw material of Asian life. There was still much to do. I must continue to do this work as long as God allows me time on this earth to do it. I must continue to be tender, for to be tender one must be courageous. Now before my own highest mountain I must be braver than ever, even though bravery is sometimes a sad song. No, my candle was not gutted.

Looking out of the window in the moon-shimmering night I felt a cloudy out-of-touchness with everything. I had a pleasant disembodiment from my own self. The physical

tiredness of the trip from Muong Sing to Honk Kong had drained me. My mind put me somewhere else where I could look back at the body of Tom Dooley.

Once many years ago, as I sat on a small stool in the candlelit room of Dr. Albert Schweitzer on the banks of the Ogowe, in French Equatorial Africa, the great old gentleman said to me, "The significance of a man, Tom, is not in what he attains, but rather in what he longs to attain." I thought to myself, I must continue to long to attain.

The value of love is stronger than that of hate, and I was confident that many people loved me and the work I was doing. I must now draw new strength from the knowledge of their love, strength because I needed it. In my detachment everything suddenly became intent and vivid. I cried a bit and at one moment I laughed out loud. The woman sitting in the seat beside me asked if I was all right. I replied, "Yes, I'm just fine."

There were some hours on that plane trip when I was surfeited with contentment, for I felt as though I had completed a job well done. The plane roared on east, flying over Thailand, Burma, India and up through Europe.

I thought about the kind of village medicine that I was doing. It would be hard for me to do anything else. This kind of medicine is my salvation, my hold on life. It is my means of expression. Also flowing and surging in me was the passionate desire to tell others of this work, of this kind of medicine, of this life. I did not see how I could ever quit village work. I must treat patients with my own hands, reach out and give personal help every day. I feel that I must go out of my way to do it and to do it with tenderness.

I thought of Earl and Dwight back at work in Muong Sing. And I thought of my other crews in former years. And one thing stirred me, the fact that so many people gave me

something or were something to me without my knowing it. There were some people I had never exchange a word with, but had merely heard of by report. There were others that I had known and loved. All these people had a decisive influence on me. They entered into my life and became a power within me, almost without my knowledge.

I had left Muong Sing so rapidly that I had forgotten to say "So long" to the boys, at least "So long" as warmly as I would had I known I would be gone for months. I began to go over in my mind all the events of the past months. I remembered the day I arrived in Laos, and the press conference announcing the start of MEDICO which was held in New York before my departure. It was February 4, 1958. What had I said to the reporters? I must try to remember . . .

TWO ·

THE START OF *MEDICO*

"Ladies and gentlemen, a few weeks ago I turned over to my publisher the manuscript of my book, *The Edge of Tomorrow.* It ended on the encouragement of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's word of hope. When we told Dr. Schweitzer of the plan we are going to announce to you today, he accepted Honorary Chairmanship and he sent us this message: 'I do not know what your destinies will ever be, but this I do know: you will always have happiness if you seek and find, how to serve.'

"Now today, on the fourth of February, 1958, I feel as though I were on the verge of the longest journey I have ever taken."

In trying to communicate to the newsmen before me, I felt I had become a little stiff. I must grope and find *me* again. It had been so long since I had had to express myself to fellow-Americans like this. I felt a strong confidence welling up within me, forming my words. This same confidence, blended with sweat, effort and hope, must form the action of MEDICO.

"On this day a new organization is being founded. It will be entitled MEDICO, which stands for Medical International Cooperation Organization. MEDICO's reason for existence is

simple. We wish to take care of people who are sick, in areas where they have little or no chance of receiving medical aid.

"We are in no way a religious or political organization. We're not intending to convert anyone to Catholicism, or Protestantism, nor are we trying to make them new Republicans or old Democrats. We are not trying to replace any already existing programs in the field of health. We feel that the World Health Organization and the International Cooperation Administration of our government's foreign aid program are doing excellent jobs in preventive medicine. What we wish to do is a job in simple therapeutic medicine."

I wondered if the meaning of therapeutic was clear. "By therapeutic I mean the simple act of passing out pills. Sometimes foreign aid becomes enmeshed in an obscure tangle of programs. The simplicity of MEDICO's program is this: we actually believe that we can win the friendship of people only by getting down on the ground and working beside them, on equal terms, humans-to-humans, towards goals that they understand and seek themselves. MEDICO is a person-to-person, heart-to-heart program. There is no more personal relationship than that of a doctor and his patient. We feel that therapeutic medicine will have a double effect: it will aid those who are sick and by that simple act it will win friendship for America."

Someone in the audience raised his hand and asked, "Where did the idea of MEDICO come from?"

"The idea of MEDICO is a blend of three ideas. We have taken some of the philosophy of Dr. Schweitzer, who believes that man belongs to man, that man has claims on man, and we have given it today's accent. We feel that man has claims on man but that this idea must be modernized into a program of self-help, a program that produces something *now*—

today and tomorrow, not next year or next decade. That dream of Schweitzer's was part of my work in the small village of Nam Tha in Laos. We tried to show the villagers of Nam Tha that we five Americans really believed that Asians had claims on us. We left America to go live amongst them, to be an intimate and integral part of their community life. In Nam Tha we cared for thousands of their sick and wounded. We delivered their babies, we went to their weddings and their funerals, and we joked with their young military. We tried to show, with love, that we understood the responsibility of those who have towards those who have not.

"We therefore added a little modern touch to this fundamental philosophy, and in correspondence with Dr. Peter Comanduras we matured this idea. Dooley and his boys can care for about 36,000 people a year; however, there are about 36 million times some other multiple who still need help. We should really enlarge our program. When I returned to America *just a few months* ago, Dr. Peter Comanduras and I met in Washington and we talked about our mutual dreams. It was from this that MEDICO was born.

"Dr. Peter Comanduras is the Secretary General of our program. He has superb abilities that will earn for our program the position of respect it deserves among our fellow-Americans. He is giving up his private practice and teaching to devote all of his time and talent to MEDICO. He is making a great sacrifice.

"On the village level, I have had several years of practice and experience. Both of our lives are permeated with the Schweitzer concept of brotherhood. This is the combination that gave birth to MEDICO.

"In summing it up, let me say this—MEDICO wishes to render a service to people of foreign lands and at the same time

render service to our own country. We wish to clear up some of the fears and misconceptions of America that are held by people of some foreign lands. We wish to take care of their sick, and in return we wish only their love and understanding. We believe that medicine is above the give-and-take of national rivalry.

"Dr. Comanduras is leaving immediately on a tour of the world. On this tour he will speak to the leading medical people of many nations to see if they can utilize the services of MEDICO.

"I'm leaving on a lecture tour in order to raise three things: men of medicine to work in the various MEDICO teams around the world. Second, the medicines and surgical supplies that our village hospitals will need. And thirdly, the dollar donations from the general public upon which MEDICO must exist."

Then the questions started . . .

"No, MEDICO will not necessarily work in Asia alone but in any nation that asks us."

"Yes, MEDICO will demand much from the host nation. They must give free Customs entry, furnish internal transportation, kerosene, gasoline, give us *carte blanche* for their medical warehouse. Most important, the host nation must promise to sustain and maintain what we establish, after our departure."

"Yes, the host government will also be asked to pay indigenous salaries."

"How long will our teams stay in one area? That depends. In Laos I believe that we can build a hospital, stock it, run this hospital, train the personnel to handle it, and turn it over to them within a period of two to four years. In other areas this length of time might be longer."

As quickly as it had started, the press conference ended.

Peter and I looked at each other, took a deep breath, and then realized what lay ahead of us—many months of begging, of organization, of talking. We had built our castle in the air. Now we must put a solid foundation under it.

I left the very next day to begin a lecture tour of America, covering all parts of the country. I spoke in high schools, in women's clubs, in medical societies. I spoke to people on trains and planes. Everywhere I tried to point out how MEDICO does not conflict with any existing organization. I stayed in cheap hotels in small towns, in magnificent suites in large cities. The lecture tour consisted of 188 speeches in 79 different cities over 5 months.

I went to the leading pharmaceutical houses of America, and once again they demonstrated their great generosity. Chas. Pfizer & Co., Mead Johnson & Co., and Eli Lilly & Co. were especially generous to me as they always had been in the past. We set up MEDICO in the beginning as a division of the International Rescue Committee. We needed a mother organization to help us get started. Through the good offices of the International Rescue Committee we acquired a warehouse, and soon the medicines and supplies began to pour in. Later we became an independent organization.

The A. S. Aloe Company of Saint Louis, Missouri, supplied me once again with all the surgical equipment that we needed. Their Vice President, Henry Scherck, became MEDICO's most powerful friend. He headed our Committee for Procurement of Surgical Supplies.

When my lecture tour was finished in June, MEDICO had over one million dollars worth of medicines donated to it, and about three hundred thousand dollars in cash donations. My book, *The Edge of Tomorrow,* was condensed in "The Reader's Digest" in the issue of May, 1958. This brought a

tremendous response in dollars, and also illuminated the purpose of MEDICO to millions of people around the world. Everywhere I went in America people showed their warm admiration towards our program—warm admiration portrayed by cold cash.

Over six hundred doctors, corpsmen and nurses had applied to join the various MEDICO teams. I had started out to raise money, men and medicine. And with the luck of the Irish and the grace of God, MEDICO had these three. After the tour ended, Dooley was nearly voiceless. Well, almost. When Peter returned from his round-the-world tour, he told me we had been invited by 23 nations of the world to do our kind of work in their nations.

It had been at the end of 1957, after turning my hospital at Nam Tha over to the Lao government (the story I tell in *The Edge of Tomorrow*), that I had come home, via Africa. In Lambarene I had one of the greatest privileges of my life —working at the hospital of Dr. Albert Schweitzer. And there I had dreamed up and solidified much of the plan for a world-wide miracle: MEDICO! Now that our plan was really launched, I would soon leave for Laos once again.

THREE ·

PICKING A NEW MEDICAL TEAM

I was pleased and grateful that over six hundred men and women had written in the opening months to volunteer to work with me in Laos or on other MEDICO teams around the world. Yet how would I ever choose my new men? This would be a risky thing. My last team was made up of men with whom I had worked before. They had been my Navy corpsmen, I knew what they were like. I knew that their abilities and friendship would be a help to me. For the new team I would have to choose unknown, untried men, and this would be really difficult.

Throughout the lecture tour, after each speech, people would come up and say, "Doctor, I'd like to do that kind of work with you in Asia. I am an ex-Army or ex-Navy corpsman. May I help you?" I would always set up plans to have breakfast with them, or coffee later on. After I spoke with them, I would go back and write prodigious notes about each person, covering everything from their personalities to their medical and surgical abilities.

The choice of Earl Rhine and Dwight Davis was almost accidental. On March 17th, *Life* magazine did a picture story on my lecture tour. Two young men working in a hospital in Austin, Texas, read that story, turned and said to each other,

"This is the kind of work for us." Both these men were veterans, and both were surgical technicians working at Brackenridge Hospital while in pre-med at the University of Texas.

They then sat down and composed a lengthy letter of application, including a list of every single surgical experience that they had had, every operation on which they had assisted, and all of their sundry talents. Then they slept on it and in the morning they decided the letter was no good. They then wrote a very terse and succinct letter, offering their services to me and asking for an immediate reply.

They went one step further. They telephoned my mother. The fact that they obtained her number and had the intelligence to find the city in which she lived was a pleasing thing to me. My mother has a very good sense of business about her and endorsed the boys practically by "the sound of their voices" and their go-to-itiveness.

Their letter came to me like all the other letters, but when I saw the Texas address I telephoned Pete Kessey, one of my old crew who lived in Austin. I asked Pete to interview these two volunteers. I pointed out to Pete that he must give only the blackest picture of working in Asia, and especially point out what a hard-headed, stubborn, difficult and irascible son-of-a-gun Dooley was to work for.

The next night Pete called me and said he'd interviewed these two men and thought "they were both tops." Knowing me as well as he did and knowing what these two men would be involved in, working and living with me, Pete was an excellent judge. After all, like most humble Irishmen, I think I'm practically faultless. Pete does not exactly agree, so he could warn potential candidates about the guy for whom they would work. I didn't want some juvenile

enthusiast who would sour and quit on me when proximity dulled the edge of admiration.

A week later I called the men and set up an appointment in Houston, Texas. I had a speech in New York on a Monday and in Washington on a Wednesday, so that gave me all of Tuesday free. I took an early morning plane on Tuesday and arrived in Houston, where Earl and Dwight met me at the airport.

They told me many months later, with a laugh in their voices, how they stood so nervously at the ramp, watching various people get off the plane. Earl would say, "That's him," and Dwight would respond, "Oh, no, he's too fat." Then Dwight would say, "Maybe that's him," and Earl would reply, "Oh, no, he's too old." Their nervousness led in this guessing game. Finally they did spot me and I spotted them. My first impression was, "These guys are too well dressed to work for me in a dirty Asian village."

Yet after about four hours of speaking with them, I had made up my mind that these were the men I wanted. They were the best of any I had interviewed. They possessed innumerable qualities that I wanted. They were not in any way religious fanatics and their idealism was balanced by a sense of realism because, in their overseas' duties they had seen the stink and misery in which idealism must rub its nose. Yet they had enough youthful idealism to be willing to accept the challenge of any kind of a job. They were in good health and had superb medical technician training.

They both were seniors at the University of Texas and wanted to go on to become doctors. They had an obvious amount of admiration for Tom Dooley, yet neither was too full of hero worship. They seemed, after a four-hour interview, to have a good sense of balance between right and wrong, duty and pleasure. My own opinion, blended with

what Pete had told me and my mother's intuitive knowledge convinced me that these were my new crew. We then went to dinner at a glorious hotel in Houston to enjoy the first meal that we would ever have together, including the last steak that we would eat together for a long time.

Several times during the conversation I mentioned that they both had on the same kind of dark blue pin-stripe necktie. Each time I mentioned it, they gulped. Later Dwight asked, "Doctor, would it make any difference if we were married?" I said, "Of course it would. I would not take a married man with me. On my last trip, Denny Shepard and Norm Baker were married. Things were doubly tough for them than for the bachelors of my team. I feel that to do this kind of work one must devote to it all his time, all his energy, and all his emotions. He could not be involved with nostalgia and homesickness for wife and family."

Dwight again said, "You mean that if we were married you would not take us?" To which I replied, "Probably not. Why? You're certainly not married, are you?"

With this they both slumped in their chairs, took a deep breath, and said, "Yes, we are both married."

They proceeded to spend the next hour, explaining how happy their wives were that they were going to Asia. This I found hard to believe. They insisted. They said they had no children and both their wives were working independently and would continue their nursing work. Their wives said that their salaries and the $150 a month I planned to pay the boys would be enough. Earl was quick to point out that he'd been married seven years though only 26, and "we are not exactly honeymooners, sir." I had been convinced that these were the top men of all that I had interviewed. I was pleased with Pete's opinion of them, so once again I de-

cided that I'd better change my mind. After all, isn't changing one's mind a sign of intelligence?

At dinner I again commented that they looked like the Bobbsey Twins with their identical neckties. They burst out laughing and said, "We wore these neckties at Dwight's wedding several years ago. By accident we both put them on tonight, and almost let the cat out of the bag when you noticed that they are identical."

We smiled that evening and laughed with the warm laughter that comes from good companionship. I took a midnight plane back to the east and the boys drove back to their homes in Austin. The decision was made. Their wives were not opposed to their doing this kind of work as they intelligently realized what fine men this experience would make them. My team was formed. All of us were happier men by dawn that next day.

Dwight Davis is 27 years old. He was born and raised in the state of Washington. While he was in the Air Force, he was stationed in Korea. He had plenty of time to see some of the wretchedness into which he was now plunging his life, the wretchedness of Asia. In 1955, as a civilian, he started college in Austin, Texas, and began to work nights at Brackenridge Hospital. It was at that time that he met a fellow veteran, Earl Rhine. Dwight and Earl became fast friends and this friendship was one of the things that pleased me about their application. "They sound like a good pair. Two for the price of one," I thought to myself. I smiled because I thought it was good to have a pair. It is good for two men who work together to be friends because they would have mutual solace when I got angry with one, and angry I do get.

Dwight is tall and very slender, with a tightness in his facial features. When his horn-rimmed glasses slip down

off his nose a bit, he looks something like Arthur Miller. With an immobile face he sometimes seems stern, but he is not at all; quite the contrary. He has a heart so big that it suffuses his character. He has a wonderful love for children. He calls village kids "Mr. Bigger-eyes-than-mine" or "Tex" or "Hi, buddy." Dwight walks with a lithe gait, but in a long and lanky step, not unlike a Texan even though Texas is his adopted state. He speaks with a clipped accent of the northwest, but has adopted the expansiveness of Texans. His eyes are deep-set, penetrating, and blue in color. You rarely see them, however, because the rim of his low-slung glasses hides his eyes. His hair is close-cropped, almost a crew cut, though it gets a little long and scraggly at the back of his neck. His wife is a Mexican girl and, as a consequence, Dwight speaks good Spanish. In the mountains of Indo-China, when upset, he would break out into a spate of Spanish.

Dwight is a quiet man, and I used to think that he was almost invisible, saying very little, though always working much. In seventeen months of working with me, he never expressed any particular emotional response to having Dooley for his boss nor to working amongst these people of Asia. However, like the proverb of the way still water runs deep, I always knew that Dwight Davis was deep. Over a year later, in a hospital bed in New York, I was to receive a letter from him which proved this adage.

Earl Rhine is 26 years old. "Rhine like the river," he would say. Though born in Illinois, Earl had lived in Texas long enough to become "Texan." (In spite of this language barrier I was able to communicate with him.) After many years of marriage, just a few weeks before Earl left for Laos, he found out that his wife was pregnant. He nevertheless felt as though he could afford a year and a half

ut of his life to invest in Asia. He had a valiant little gal or a wife who said that she would take care of herself and their child while Earl was out taking care of thousands of kids in Asia. Indeed, she did.

Earl is shorter than Dwight. The thing about Earl that you noticed immediately was the extreme gentleness of his manner. This later became doubly obvious when I watched how he handled his patients. His black curly hair had earned him the nickname "Marcel"; he likes neither the nickname nor the hair. His features are round and though not fat he is somewhere between chubby and normal. He has large brown eyes and at six o'clock at night he looks like he should shave again. As I was later to observe with satisfaction, he does his tasks quietly and he does them well.

In Earl and Dwight I was confident I had as good a medical team as I could possibly have found to work with me in the unknown months ahead. I could soon fly towards the edge of tomorrow once more.

FOUR ·

ARRIVAL IN LAOS

In June I boarded a plane for Hawaii. MEDICO was not yet five months old. My mind was flooded with plans and my heart was warmed by the generosity of my country. I was pleased at having had contact with the abrasive minds of some of the young students of America; I was still dizzy from the questions asked by thousands of them on my lecture tour. I looked out of the window of the magnificent Pan American plane and watched a little sunlight come over America. That same sunlight would soon be over Asia. I hoped that this sunlight would warm the hearts of the people of Asia whom I had grown so to love.

As the plane swooped into the airport at Hawaii, I remembered landing here as a young Navy officer. In 1954 I first came here as a Navy doctor, just having finished my internship. I was en route to duty in Yokusuka, Japan. After only a few weeks in Japan I was transferred into the chaos that was to become the evacuation of North Viet Nam. For one year I stayed in North Viet Nam, working in a huge refugee camp. In my first book, *Deliver Us From Evil*, I told how more than 600,000 miserable, wretched and beaten but valiant people passed through my camp. I had the good fortune of being an intimate part of one of the greatest

tributes to the majesty of the human spirit. I saw it, I was there. I had the joy of seeing white-capped sailors respond to a call, a need, a cry for help: North Viet Nam in 1954 and 1955!

I stayed in Hawaii a week. More Americans came to the help of MEDICO. Especially grand to me was a small group of young men and women called the Junior Chinese Catholic Club and their leader, Fred Luning. Later we were to have an even more eloquent testimonial of their effectiveness.

The following weekend Earl Rhine and Dwight Davis flew to Hawaii and spent two days. This was only the second time that I had seen them in my life. I looked at these two men and thought to myself, "Dooley, you're going to live with these two guys for two years. You had better get accustomed to them, and they to you."

In the first week of July we flew to Japan and on to Hong Kong. At the latter place we had a lot of things to buy. We spent many hours walking up and down the streets of Hong Kong, arguing over prices. The Wilson Club of Bridgeport, Connecticut, had sent me a generous donation. They had written and said that they did not want to contribute any money to MEDICO itself but rather wanted to contribute something personally to me. They asked what I would like to have. I blithely answered, "A piano so I can take Chopin to North Laos." Two months later, they sent me the money. And now in Hong Kong I must find a piano.

It was an enjoyable hunt. After several days of testing every for-sale piano in Hong Kong, I finally found the zinc-lined one I wanted. But the price was almost twice as much as the Wilson Club had sent. Fortunately, the Chinese man knew of my work (after I not-so-humbly told him about it), so he generously cut the price in half. This blessed piano proved to be my most constant friend.

We flew to Saigon, where we stayed at the orphanage of Madame Vu Thi Ngai, the gallant woman of North Viet Nam whose 500 refugee children had come with her. She was now established in her new orphanage buildings in Saigon, supported by the fine American community there. Earl, Dwight and I climbed into a newly arrived jeep, painted Kelly green, which was a gift from the Willys Corporation, and began our drive across the belly of southeast Asia.

Several days later, in Cambodia, we talked to the health officials and the American Ambassador in order to make the final preparations for our MEDICO team in Cambodia. Then we went to the ancient jungle ruin of Ankor Wat.

The first night of our arrival we went out to the pool behind the Court of the Leper King. I had loved this place from years back, and wanted to go now and take a swim under the night sky. We did, and then sat around and talked. Things seemed so tranquil here. What would the next year show? Would our new hospital in Laos be successful or would it merely be a wasted effort? Would the Communist threat become more powerful and the atrocities of Yunan, China, reach out into northern Laos? Was my former hospital at Nam Tha, which we had turned over to the government of Laos, continuing or had it already collapsed?

Were those who criticized me in southeast Asia as powerful and vitriolic in their anti-Dooley ideas as they had been in the past? Would those who could think only in terms of multi-million-dollar projects snigger at my paltry efforts, or would they see that if the darkness is black enough a small candle can give a brilliant light? But worst of all, would the ogre of Communism conquer and consume the country into which we were going to move? Sitting on the mossy stones

around the side of the pool behind the Court of the Leper King, I thought of how I had grown to love these people of southeast Asia. I tried to tell Earl and Dwight of how quickly they would lose their hearts to these primitive people. I tried to tell them something of the problems that would soon face them, and I wanted to steel them for the stink and death of their next two years. We sat and talked about a realization that we all possessed—the realization that the only way man can achieve his own happiness is to strive for the happiness of others. This is a simple guide: every man has a responsibility to every other man. These two boys volunteered to go to the high rain-forest of northern Laos to act out their responsibility to other men.

I warned them of the difficulties they would encounter, hostilities from the enemy as well as green-eyed hostility from fellow Americans. I warned them of the stupidity and the ignorance, the stubbornness and the cling-to-the-pastness of the mountain tribes of northern Laos. I tried to tell them that there would be many moments in each of their days that would involve someone's very life; therefore, those moments involve eternities.

We talked of the valley of Muong Sing where we expected to work, a valley just over the mountain from Nam Tha, my former village. I told them that what comes to the valley of Muong Sing in the tide of time will affect other valleys and other lands and other people.

Earl said, "It seems so hard to realize that we are soon to be thrown into such chaos. Here at Ankor things are so tranquil."

"That is exactly the point of Asia," I said. "Earl, you will spend your days being amazed at contradictions like this. The magnificence of a wild and wonderful jungle contrasted with the wretchedness of the people who live in it; the

glories of God's nature and the seeming injustices that God puts on this earth; the tranquility of a pool at the Court of the Leper King and the hideous atrocities of northern Viet Nam; the red-hot heat of a humid day and the blue cool breeze of the mountain night."

While we were swimming, Dwight noticed a gold medal around my neck and asked to see it. He read on the back of the St. Christopher medal the words that have guided my life since 1954, the words of Robert Frost:

> *"The woods are lovely, dark and deep,*
> *But I have promises to keep,*
> *And miles to go before I sleep."*

Quietly we got back into our jeep and returned to the hotel.

Two days later we arrived in Bangkok. The boys took the jeep in for its first checkup while I flew on to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. I have a warm feeling towards many of the officials and the people of Laos. And I know that they possess the same toward me. My book on their country had been successful in America, and the Lao government had formally thanked me for telling Americans something of their Kingdom, its trials, and its needs. The Lao government, both officially and as my friends, was looking forward to welcoming me back to their Kingdom. And deep in my heart I was looking forward to my return, first to the capital, and then to my old village. Although I had been gone only eight months, I felt no less near to them than I ever had. My heart was bursting as the plane landed at the hot metal landing strip at the capital. I had returned to Laos. I promised I would. Excitement made my mouth dry while sweat rolled down my body. I was the first to push out the door and down the steps.

There were no Lao to meet me. Nor were there any Ameri-

ans. Was the plane early? No. Why had none of my Lao friends come to welcome me back? The chief of the United States Information Service, Hank Miller and his wife, probably my closest friends in all Asia, were on home-leave in America. I had wired my date of arrival well in advance to the USIS in Vientiane. I was checking my bags off the plane when an official American car pulled up with one of the USIS men. This official said to me, "Good heavens! Your plane came in on time. Planes never come in on time. We usually don't come out until much later." I immediately flushed with anger at this haughty attitude of the white man toward the Asians and their efforts at running an airline. I asked him, "Did you notify the Lao government of the time of my arrival?" He replied, "Oh, I intended to, but I'm awfully sorry, I never had a chance. I told one of my Lao assistants to go tell the Prime Minister, however. I don't know whether he did or not."

The next morning I went to the office of this same American and asked if he had made the requested appointment for me with the Premier. He apologized for "not having had a chance to get around to it but he would send an assistant over immediately." I said, "Don't bother." I then walked two blocks to the office of the Prime Minister and asked his secretary if I could see him. His secretary beamed excitement, and within five minutes I was sitting near my good friend, Premier Phoui Sananikone. He expressed regret at the fact that one one had met me at the airlines. He knew I was en route back to my "second home" and said, "We are very unhappy that we did not have a chance to extend to you the warm welcome and the affection that all of us hold for you, our *Thanh Mo America*." How good to hear my old title again, "Doctor America."

I told the Premier of our new plans for the village of

Muong Sing and the new hospital there. This choice had been made by many members of his Cabinet months before my return. He told me that things in my old hospital at Nam Tha were going well. I intended to return to Bangkok the next day and drive our jeep across Thailand, straight north to the Mekong River. We would then cross on the ferry and come into Vientiane. He again said, "My King has ordered us to extend to your mission all of the facilities of his government. This we do with great pleasure." They had done exactly this for me for the previous two years.

Again they were affirming their desire to help me to help them. They pledged to me Customs-free entry, all free kerosene and gasoline, and all indigenous salaries to be paid by them. We could have medicines that they had available at their pharmacy, and any other help that I could possibly need. The Prime Minister said, "We have the enthusiasm, we have the basic potential. You bring to us your American talents and your American medicines and teach us so that we can care for our own people."

I went to spend the night at Hank Miller's home, in his absence, and there met another man who was soon to become one of my closest friends. His name was Bob Burns. He worked for USIS, though when you asked him what he did, he would modestly reply, "I'm simply a typist in the army of the Lord." As he was non-Catholic, I always kidded him that he had "the right Lord but wrong army." It was a standing joke from that day for us to call Bob Burns "simply that typist."

I visited the Minister of Health who informed me that the warehouse would be ready for us the following week so I could transship the thirty-two tons of medicines from Bangkok. In the morning I flew back to Bangkok.

The crew loaded up the jeep, arranged for the transship-

ment, and a few days later we drove on to Vientiane. We arrived at the river late at night, left our jeep on the Thailand side of the Mekong River and crossed over in a small boat. The outboard motor pooped out and we were swept down river in the rapid current, away from the capital of Vientiane. I smiled and thought to myself, "A fine way to introduce my two men to their new Kingdom, down the river, motorless."

However, in about fifteen minutes the motor sputtered to life again, being resuscitated by the Lao mechanic who repaired it with string, spit, sweat, and ingenuity. On the Lao side of the Mekong we hitched a ride to Hank Miller's house where Bob Burns was waiting for us with bourbon on the rocks. After a clean shower, we collapsed into bed—the first night that Earl and Dwight were to spend in Laos. They would see many, many more nights before their task was done.

By previous plans, all our equipment arrived the next day. It was brought across the river and driven on trucks up to the capital. The Lao government warehouse, where the equipment would be stored, was near the Customs House. However, things were "not quite ready" and we could not put the medicine in the warehouse. I asked the American Economic Mission if they had a warehouse available for a few days. They "regretted." I looked around town for a high enough space to store this medicine for a short length of time, but no luck. As I could not leave the medicine on the trucks, there was only one alternative. The rest of the afternoon was spent unloading thirty-two tons of equipment on the lawn around Hank Miller's house. When Bob Burns returned from work, he found Hank's house practically engulfed by thirty-two tons of crates whose cubic

measurements were about the size of a solid football field, ten feet high.

While the boys were unloading (as the Commanding Officer I try to do as little physical labor as possible), I had gone to find Chai. Those of you who have read my other books know that Chai is my very good friend, corpsman, interpreter, and entrepreneur. I found Chai out near his old home on the outskirts of Vientiane. This was only a few blocks from where I had met him at a love-court, when he was courting a young girl in June, 1956. Here, two years later, Chai was now living, married to that girl.

I told Chai of our problem and he said, "*Ban pinh yanh,*" which means rustically: "To hell with it," or just about anything else you want it to mean. He immediately rounded up a half dozen of his friends and they all drove with me to Hank's house and gleefully perched themselves on top of the boxes to stand guard for the night. With no more concern than that, with complete confidence in their honesty, Earl, Dwight and I dragged ourselves into bed, the day's work done. With nearly a quarter of a million dollars worth of medicines and equipment piled around the house, covered wtih palm leaves, and guarded by Chai's languid friends, we slept well.

FIVE ·

THE VILLAGE OF MUONG SING

Muong Sing is the valley just west and a little north of Nam Tha. It is a full day's walk, but only a fifteen-minute flight, from the site of my former hospital, because the mountain which divides Nam Tha from Muong Sing rises to about 8,000 feet. Muong Sing is located just five or six miles south of the China border. It is on a direct line north from Bangkok through Vientiane to the China frontier. This is the northwest corner of northern Laos.

The almost enchanted village of Muong Sing sleeps on the floor of the valley at about 2,000 feet. All around it are purple, jagged mountains. Some of the peaks run 10,000 feet high but the average is 8,000 feet. They encircle three sides of Muong Sing, leaving only the south end of the valley open. From peak to peak is a distance of only some 25 miles.

The Prime Minister had given me a letter to the Commandant of the Lao Army, authorizing all internal transportation. That afternoon I met with the Commandant in Vientiane and chose the following morning for my reconnaissance flight to Muong Sing while the boys worked at the warehouse.

The flight from the capital to the north is a spectacular thing. Flying over the Kingdom of Laos you see craggy

mountain peaks whose spires stick up into the blue sky. In the space between these spires are broad valleys, checkerboard flat. Most are filled with small, green rice paddies. Each paddy looks like a square of beads all strung together, or a tangle of beads, or beads in a row, or in a coil, or beads twisting upon each other like a rosary dropped on a flat surface. The beads of green are in dovetailing knots, and sometimes the large beads seem to engulf the small. Between each square of rice field is a small brown-black dam of earth.

In almost every valley's central portion is a small clear river. From high in the sky it looks like a small vein or artery of clear, cool water. As you look you think, "What a lovely Shangri-La," but it is not that at all. It is another unsanitary, underdeveloped Asian village.

The further north, the more mountainous the countryside becomes, and down deep in the foliage of those mountains is wild and wonderful jungle. When the plane flies low, it seems as though the trees are reaching up to grab the plane. In some areas the mountain has been burned; I was to learn a great deal about this native custom.

It is understandable why the plane must corkscrew down in order to land on the floor of the valley. Although I had spent much time flying in Asia, when the plane suddenly lurched to the starboard and began to drop into the valley, I felt my heart go up to my mouth.

The road of the Muong Sing valley is cut out of the thick green of the jungle floor. From my plane it looked like a gray bony streak. Dotted along on both sides of the road are small little clusters of huts—these are the villages. Each village has its complement of dogs, chickens, cats, and children all of whom mix together and stray around under the houses. Asian houses are built up on stilts to protect them against the mud of the rains. Also the family animals can get under

the house for warmth and their odor is considered to be a sign of wealth. These villages sure are wealthy!

The village of Muong Sing at first glance is a sleepy little place. It is a typical Asian village, wretchedly underdeveloped, but rich with potential for future progress. The nearby rice paddies are flooded much of the year, and the emerald green of ripened rice is a beautiful thing.

The plane finally landed. From the airstrip one must walk about twenty minutes to get to "downtown" Muong Sing. There are really several villages for the quadrangle of Muong Sing has a village dangling on the top of each of its four corners. Muong Sing, with appendages, has about 4,000 inhabitants. Along one edge of the village is a large "Beau-Geste"-type mud fortress, complete with moat. Adjacent to the military encampment is a house of the village Mayor, or Chao Muong.

First of all, I went to see the Chao Muong. He was a nice little man, socially charming, and not very effective. He took me over to two forlorn and dilapidated straw-mud-cement huts. "Our dispensary," he said. So these were the buildings that would be turned over to us to rebuild and to make into a hospital! This was not a new challenge. It was just as it had been in Nam Tha not so long ago. I had only to look at the buildings to know how much work stood ahead. I checked on the nearness of the water supply (it was far away), and the nearness of the military (very close). In fact, our hospital would be across the road from the fortress. I wondered how much aid the languid-looking Chao Muong would give to us.

A few hours later I flew out of the valley. The plane plunged into the misty evening sky, just skimming the treetops. It then circled over up and up and finally leveled out and rode on the very crest of the jungle for just a moment. It

suddenly banked tightly, making one more circle in order to rise above the crest, and vaulted over the mountains on to the south. I looked at the horizon ahead and it seemed to sink and slowly rotate, and suddenly we were in the marshmallow mist of the clouds. I looked again at the valley below, jeweled and precise. It lay quietly. It seemed tranquil. Would it be this way for long, I wondered, or would war soon wound it and burn it and scar it? In less than three hours the plane took me back to the heat of Vientiane.

In the capital we then went to work, loading planes to bring equipment to the north. I knew it would take about eight round trips and so we planned to take the first load of essential living equipment up and leave Earl, Dwight, Chai and Si, my former chief cook and bottle washer, who had rejoined us. I would return on the empty plane. The following day I could return to the north with another load, and back again. By this process we figured that within a week we could move about eight tons of essential equipment and medicines to start our project. The remaining 24 tons would be brought up as needed, over the ensuing months.

The next morning at dawn we loaded two tons onto borrowed trucks and drove to the military airport just outside the city of Vientiane. We loaded the planes. Earl and Dwight spent much of their time on this flight north looking out of the windows. They were heading to the village where they had come to invest two years of their lives. As the plane flew northward, their tension built and mine did too. Several hours later we bounced to a landing on the thick grass strip of Muong Sing.

We then unloaded the plane, but we were not alone. We had the help of many villagers who were all watching and wondering what this spectacular thing that had come

to them really was. They would soon know. From the landing strip into town there is a trail. On either side of the trail there is a high wall of jungle trees, almost inextricable vegetation. There is always a soft and sweetish smell in this valley, and almost always strange and savage sounds. While the villagers were unloading the plane, under the direction of Chai and Si, Dwight, Earl and I walked fast into town. I wanted to show them the huts that would be ours.

Earl and Dwight were aghast. The main house in which we were to live had just a yawning hole instead of a door. The floor was sunken and there were pools of brackish water in the center of each room. There was a cesspool-like area that I wanted converted into the kitchen. On the grounds of what would be the hospital compound were buffalo wallows deep in mud and filth. There were several paths running right across the compound and in the back a string of dirty grass huts. The whole area looked miserable. We would have to remake this place completely to build what we were seeking, a nice, neat MEDICO compound.

I outlined to the boys the first essentials: doors on the buildings, cover for the newly arrived gear, the construction of a functioning outhouse, cement for the holes in the walls, patches for the roofs, and ceilings. I told them to emphasize the house first, making it livable, so that from this base they could work on the second building, the hospital. We had dreams of building a third building for a ward, at a later date. They took a deep breath and said, "O.K., sir, the Davis-Rhine Home Construction Gang will go to work. The Lord only knows what will come of it, however." I wasn't worried. I don't think the Lord was, either.

We hiked back to the airport. The plane was unloaded and the pilot was tinkering with the right engine. I said good-by to the boys, climbed into the empty plane, and sat

on the floor, looking out of a window. For some reason the plane had to rev up its props for about twenty minutes. Earl and Dwight were sitting on top of the equipment. Sheets of corrugated metal that we had purchased for roofing were flapping in a propwash. It had begun to rain, and they looked forlorn and drenched.

While the pilot held the plane on the end of the landing strip, I kept looking back at these two young men. Here they were, twenty-six and twenty-seven years old, more than half a world away from their wives, out beyond the beyond. They were sitting on a primitive landing strip in an ancient land, just a few miles from the hostile frontier of Red China. When this plane took off, there would be no further transportation into this valley until I returned. Here were two young men who did not speak the native dialect, relying on interpreters whose English was highly inadequate. Here were two very brave young Americans. Suddenly, with a jerk, the plane leaped forward and began its flight up and out of the valley. As the plane flew on, the boys looked like small specks in the distance. They became smaller and smaller. In the months to follow, they became larger and larger.

I spent the next two weeks loading up the military planes from the south and sending them up to the north. I was especially anxious to get a shipment of food off to the boys. They were living off the village market.

My zinc-lined piano was in the warehouse but I did not feel that I could morally send it north on the Lao military aircraft. I went to the commercial airline and asked them if they would fly it up for me. The Frenchmen who ran the airline were so amused at the idea of a piano in the foothills of the Himalayas that they promptly agreed to do it as a contribution to civilization. I took the piano out to the air-

lines the following day and they shipped it on up to Muong Sing.

I was told a few weeks later that the reaction at Muong Sing was strange. The boys had been eating bizarre native food, and their gastro-intestinal tracts were a bit angry. Each day they thought that the next plane would have canned food aboard it. They went out to the airstrip on this particular day and were positive that good old Dr. Dooley would come through with the food. Instead of the military cargo plane, a commercial plane arrived and unloaded a huge box. They opened it eagerly and found—a piano! Earl said to Dwight, "What can we do with it? We can't play it and we can't eat it." They contemplated just leaving it at the airstrip, but finally they loaded it into an ox-cart and dragged it, strings, hammers, ivories, zinc lining and all, to our newly repaired house.

The boys were doing a lot of construction on the house and the hospital buildings and were getting everything into good shape. Down in the capital I finished handling the formalities with Customs and the government. After I saw that all the essential gear had been shipped up, I flew north again. We would soon be ready to start our hospital work at Muong Sing.

On my arrival, I found that the house was livable and the hospital almost workable.

Our house has three rooms, each about 18 x 23 feet in size. In the center room we put crates up against the wall and covered them with thin mattresses, forming couches on one side and a chair on the other side. The "dining room" table stands in front of one of these couches and some chairs are around its free side. Against one wall, in splendor, stands my piano. On the other side of the door is a bookcase (which

has a distinct list to the starboard). We had a very small fireplace which was used as a cooking area until the boys knocked it down; they dug a much larger one and now we boast quite a noble and proud fireplace. One wonders about the need for a fireplace in a tropical land but in this high valley the early morning is quite brisk. At night the cold mist lays low in our valley. Chill enters the night air, but we do not feel it. Warmed by an inner sense of accomplishment we warm ourselves even more by sitting in a semicircle in front of man's most ancient friend, the fire.

The walls of our hut were constructed of a plaster-like substance made of a great deal of mud and a very little cement. The ceiling is high and the floor is stone. Later we laid cement on top of the stone and leveled the floor out so the water did not collect in the middle. Unlike most of the village huts, our house was built on the ground. Many, many months later we put up a corrugated sheet-metal ceiling. This was necessary because the birds collected in our eaves and kept messing up our house, to say nothing of interfering with our meals. The room to the west of the center room is our bedroom. Here we built a platform along the wall and laid five mattresses and bedding rolls on top. Mosquito nets were hung above and we slept Asian style, along one long platform rather than in individual beds. On the top of the platform along each side we built small shelves to keep our clothes in and at the foot of the platform we kept our locker boxes. Along the other wall we had one bed for our rare female guests, and most of our male guests just slept on the platform in Asian style.

The east side of the living room was where our Lao helpers slept, in the same style as ours. They hung more pictures on the whitewashed mud wall than we did. They had more sense. Whereas our wall crumbled when bugs got into the

plaster, you could never see what was happening to their wall because it was covered with calendar art.

Staggering along the front of our house was a porch. Where the porch ended in front of the main door, there was an extension covered over and closed in. This became Si's kitchen. We laid a good cement floor, built him a large cooking table upon which he could put his kerosene stoves, and large shelves were built against the wall to store the food.

Back in the corner we built a shower. This was not a shower such as Peter Kessey built in Vang Vieng, (*"la douche du Pierre"*); however, the fundamentals were the same. In Vientiane we had a large 50-gallon tank made with a gooseneck coming out and a shower head on the end of this. This tank was placed on a large flat board connected with lines which went through pulleys and came down near the other side of the kitchen. We could lower this huge tank of water through the system of pulleys to easy filling-level, and dump buckets of heated water from the well into the tank. Then the tank would be pulled up by the lines until it was about eight feet high. We hung a piece of tarpaulin for a shower curtain, built a drainage pit and a bamboo floor as the shower deck, and enjoyed all the comforts of a hot-shower-at-home.

Out in the back we built an outhouse in magnificent style. While I was away on a village trip one day, the boys painted over its door, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." On the inside of the door facing the seat, I put up a large piece of paper with all the Lao alphabet on it so that we could learn the script in our leisure moments.

On the front porch we built a shaving area consisting of nothing but a wooden board with two circle holes cut into it and enameled basins countersunk into these holes. Under-

neath the basins we put a metal drain joining a rubber tube which then ran into the ground. Under the ground the boys planted some large green bamboo pipes which drained out into a ditch in front of the compound. Quite an ingenious Asian water system. On the side of this washing area was another large 55-gallon water barrel made out of an empty gasoline drum. This was kept filled from the well.

The well? This was a personal gift of Ambassador Horace Smith. Within a few weeks after we arrived, Ambassador Smith came to visit us. This was an extremely nice gesture. Never before, when I was in Laos, did any high American dignitary ever visit me. We were tremendously thrilled that he came. He said, "Tom, what can I specifically give to you?" I said, "Sir, two wells and a jeep." He laughed and asked me to explain myself. I pointed out that we wanted to build a cement well and that cement was heavy, therefore costly, I did not want to be so expensive to the Lao Ministry of Health so early. And I wished to transport my jeep to the north. This too was a heavy problem in transportation. Both of these were "luxuries," because we really could get our water from the local river and walk instead of ride in a jeep. The Ambassador said he would take care of it and within three days the Embassy plane returned bringing us a jeep and the cement rings for two wells.

There is a story about the jeep. Muong Sing has one "road" that runs the length of our valley. I use the word road in quotation marks advisedly because this road, which runs about 20 miles, is a single buffalo-cart lane. No other type of vehicle had been used on this road until the Army brought a jeep up and, a few months later, we received our jeep. In all of northern Laos, for hundreds of square miles, there were only two jeeps and only twenty miles of "road."

Nevertheless, one day a few months later, these two jeeps actually ran into each other.

We loved to put titles on things and after the well was completed and a little well-house above it, we tried for weeks to think of an appropriate title. "Smith's Water Hole" sounded a little fresh for three young men to use in honor of an Ambassador. "American-Nam," meaning American water, sounded a bit too nationalistic. Ambassador Smith's name does not lend itself to rhyme and so his well remained unnamed but not unappreciated.

The Laos Minister of Public Works sent us an old carpenter friend from Nam Tha to help us build our buildings. We called him "Bolum," which means "uncle." Bolum didn't believe in any of this modern stuff, like nails or gasoline-run buzz saws; everything had to be wedged and cut by hand. It took Bolum quite some time to get these done, but never can we complain of architectural shoddiness. Our buildings certainly do not look as though they were built in haste. We asked him to build a small roof over the well house and he ended up building something massive enough to be a pagoda.

Every little thing is a problem in Laos. To make a building you have to chop the tree down, skin the bark off of it, cut it into planks, then cut the planks to fit and then groove and wedge and paint. Nothing is easy in the primeval forest, as we knew when we came to Asia.

Since Chai was now a married man, we had to build a house for him on the back of the compound. The poor boys needed Chai very badly during the opening months, but Chai had come down with a case of yellow jaundice. He spent his first three weeks in Muong Sing as the first patient in our new hospital. When his house was finished, he moved into it.

Once in Nam Tha I had a patient whose leg had been hideously bloated by infection and then withered up. There are pictures of this boy, named Owi, in my book *The Edge of Tomorrow.* When Owi heard that I had returned to Muong Sing, a full day's walk from Nam Tha, he came to me to join our team. We were delighted to hire him, as he is a very bright boy. He became the assistant to Si. When Owi had to have an assistant he found La, a Thai Lu tribe boy, to help him. Therefore the staff of the house consisted of Si, Owi and La—Owi, a Thai Dam tribe boy; La, a Thai Lu; Si, a Lao, each speaking a dialect a little different. Each of them had their own small specialization (not unlike the American Medical Association). Face is tremendously important in the Orient. I would offend Si if I went directly to Owi to ask for something. Si had given to Owi responsibility for the grounds and for the food contributed by the patients as payment in the clinic. Owi had given La responsibility for the house—cleaning, dusting, and making of the beds. The two boys helped serve dinner while Si, who had previously cooked the dinner, would sit down at the table and eat with us.

This division of authority is important, and we would always go to Si to have him tell La and Owi to do various things. Owi had a battalion of small kids from the village who assisted him. When the lawn had too much debris on it, when the water buffaloes had gotten in and made a wallow somewhere, when a bad wind had broken a lot of palm trees and their fronds were all over the ground, Owi would call his battalion together and they would sweep over the compound, cleaning it much as hordes of locusts clean a field of corn.

As none of us believe in exploitation, these children were paid for their work. They were paid by being allowed to

pick out some jewelry from the huge chest of costume jewelry that had been collected for us by children all around America. The children of our village would come and say to Owi, "Do you have some work for us?" What this really meant was, "May we have a piece of costume jewelry?" They knew us well enough to know that we "gave" nothing away, and that they must earn these things. It appealed to their pride and we felt this was important.

On the same theory we demanded that all of our patients pay us to the best of their ability. They cannot pay in money but they can pay in kind. An operation would cost several chickens. A delivery, one chicken. Pills would cost eggs or rice or fruit. When the pineapple season came, we would get as many as twenty or thirty pineapples at the end of the day's sick call. We needed this food, we had a staff of some ten or fifteen to feed, and a hospital full of patients; we put all of the donated food to good use. I think that easy and condescending charity robs people, and perhaps nations, of their self-respect.

Once the clinic began to run, it became important that we find a student staff. I was not too concerned with the training of Earl and Dwight myself. I am not interested alone in the amount of antibiotics that circulate in the bodies of our patients. But I am most interested in the amount of education that circulates in the hearts and minds of the people of our high valley. After our departure this will last longer than will their blood level of penicillin.

Therefore, we needed to find students and begin our training program. We went to the Military Commandant and suggested to him that we open a training school for the military. He was delighted and said that he would have some men sent over to us the next day. The next day ten men came and never have I seen such a motley crew. (I

suppose my professor at St. Louis University Medical School said the same thing after he met his new freshman class.) The Lao army students were made up of several tribes, the Thai Dam, Thai Lu, Yao and Lao. Each tribe considers the others just a little bit inferior.

My first glance at the students made one boy almost an immediate favorite. His name was Deng. Deng was very short and looked about fourteen, although he claimed to be twenty-one. He was very olive-skinned, with a dark heavy shank of hair and two of the widest doe eyes I have ever seen. Months later as he would see surgery, see medical miracles, see the progress of patients, his eyes would get bigger and bigger. It looked as though his whole face were engulfed by the whites of his eyes. Deng stayed on with us while other students came and went. Deng became a very intricate part of the Dooley team at Muong Sing. We all grew to love him very much. He became a competent compassionate corpsman.

The first thing we had to do was to explain to students that they must not pick their noses. There were a few other commandments, such as:

"Thou shalt not spit on the deck.

"Thou shalt not scratch thyself.

"When thou wearest rubber gloves, thou shalt not shake hands with thy friend.

"Thou shalt not toss the left-over water on the floor.

"Thou shalt not open capsules and dump powder in hand of patient, but thou shalt push pill in mouth of patient.

"Thou shalt cut thy fingernails to the quick, including the fifth fingernail.

"Thou *shalt* and thou *shalt not* one thousand times."

The next step was to try to get them to be a little better group of men. The first thing this entailed was teeth clean-

ing. Earl, who had a penchant for dentistry, began to scrape the tartar off their teeth, and for their first pay we gave them toothbrushes and toothpaste. We introduced our student staff to the bizarre habit of daily toothbrushing.

Then we had to reteach ourselves that patience is the companion of wisdom.

As the months went on we grew more and more fond of these boys. Later we brought three girls into study with us. However, the same problems that arise in coeducational schools began to arise in our hospital. A little pinching here and there, a little play here and there, and a slight deterioration of the work level.

People talk about the differences between Americans and the Asians. It is obvious that there are differences, but these are good. We have no desire in Laos to build a mirror image of an American hospital. We have no desire that my staff mimic the staff of anybody else anywhere. We just want to illustrate to these people what we are, and if they wish to adopt our system, fine. If they do not, then though we believe it's their loss, it is their decision to make.

Differences of race and culture are not accurate measurements of superiority or inferiority. As I see it, uniformity is something to be abhorred. The world would be a very unattractive place if everything conformed. China through her commune system is trying to build such conformity. It is not a pleasant thought, because it is an offense against freedom.

The great richness of our universe is due above all to its diversity. We should take honorable pride in the distinct accomplishments of the Irish, the French, the Asian, the Negro. We must be equally aware that the accomplishments of others are proper subjects for their pride too. These

thoughts were present in each day's work. These differences were obvious and pleasing to us.

Our students pitched into each day's work with a wonderful vitality. They soon grew to have no fear of us. They came to our house in the morning and mixed their own coffee, sat around and read magazines (looking at the pictures), and were very much members of the team, not employees of a Westerner. Some things were hard for them. I imagine that we three Americans made an appalling sight: we talked so fast, we walked so fast, we did such bizarre things. It must have been more difficult for them to adjust to us than it was for us to adjust to them. The instinctive pride that these young men and women had in becoming members of our team was a very bright and precious thing. We had to care for that pride and nurture it. We had to take their abilities and their youthfulness and teach them to grow tall and straight, glowing and strong.

There was much they had not seen of raw life even in their own Asian land. The sick and the wretched often live and die in the corners of their huts, out of the sight of other villagers. Suddenly our student staff were slapped with all the drudgery and frustration of medical work. They knew some of the hopelessness, and the unremitting, grinding treadmill of work. They saw that the sick vomit, the dying die, the maimed limp forever. We had to show our students that along with the ugly part of life they would also see that precious thing called hope. Just as the rain forest trees soar over even our mountaintops, these young men must soar over the heads of their compatriots.

I treated these men as I treated my own two Americans. To an outsider one would notice little difference in the way I spoke to or dealt with any of them. This is as Earl and Dwight would have wished it, and it was essential for our

students. I am their brother, yes, but their older brother. Though Asians seldom speak roughly to each other, I frequently spoke strongly to my students. Once when Deng, for about the forty-fifth time, had put an instrument back into the case unwashed, I blew my stack. In front of several of his student friends, I told him that he was not a capable man and that I had no room in my hospital for men who did *not* do things *as* I told them. I told Deng to go. I would replace him with someone else. I know I spoke to him very sternly but this had been an offense committed too many times. Deng slunk outside and cried his eyes red. Several hours later he came back and pleaded, "*Kho tot kenoi, Thanh Mo America, dai.* I'm sorry, Doctor America, please. . . ." Of course he was forgiven and has never put an unclean instrument away since that time.

It is a very wonderful thing to watch the young men grow and mature. It was feeling the pulse of existence in our high valley. They watched people dying, suffering, being healed, being born. Our working together in the languid afternoon, hiking together down mountain trails, our shooting the rapids on boats, gave us a common touch of humanity and made it evident that the brotherhood of man exists as surely as does the Fatherhood of God.

Asians respond to the help of brotherhood with affection. With these men of Asia I found my life's work. My convictions have gained in strength whatever, from time to time, they may have lost in disillusion. I will work amongst these people. I will train them as best I can. But I must do more than just treat the sick. I must bear witness, I must speak up as often as possible and according to my ability. I must tell other Americans of these Asians. I think all men should reaffirm what they know, what they believe. I want to speak of the spirit of Asia.

The spirit of man is not a nebulous thing. The spirit of man is this palpable thing in the hearts of Deng and Chai, Earl and Dwight. On this earth each man must find his field of work. For Tom Dooley the workbench is Asia. Here where the mountains mingle with the night, where there is the anguish of living and dying, here in these high valleys I will work for all my days.

A few weeks after our arrival in Muong Sing a man came to our still unfinished house, with a huge basket of flowers and fruits. He wanted to perform a *baci.* When we first arrived in Nam Tha in 1957, there was a certain hostility and coldness amongst the people of the valley. We were new, we were white men who had strange techniques, we did strange things. They had never seen us before, and they had heard much from the Communists and from the jungle rulers, both good and bad. The situation was not the same when we arrived in Muong Sing. The word of our work in Nam Tha in the preceding years had spread, and this man's visit was proof.

The traditional ceremony of *baci* consists of tying the white cotton string of friendship around the wrists of those to whom the *baci* is offered. As each string is tied, one makes the wish, "I wish you happiness," "I wish you longevity," "I wish you much love," "I wish you wives and many children," "I wish you blue skies, bright night and good health."

We did not know why these people had come to us to offer us a *baci,* as we had yet to treat them. The man brought his wife, sister, aunt, uncle and a half a dozen children. We talked about many things, always trying to figure out exactly why he was offering this *baci* for us. Then he pulled over his little son, yanked down his pants and showed me a neat hairline scar. I had done a herniorrhaphy on the boy in 1957. He remembered us well and was grateful for our

returning to North Laos. I remembered that when his son had been my patient they had walked all the way across the mountain that separates Muong Sing from Nam Tha. Now I live on his side of that mountain.

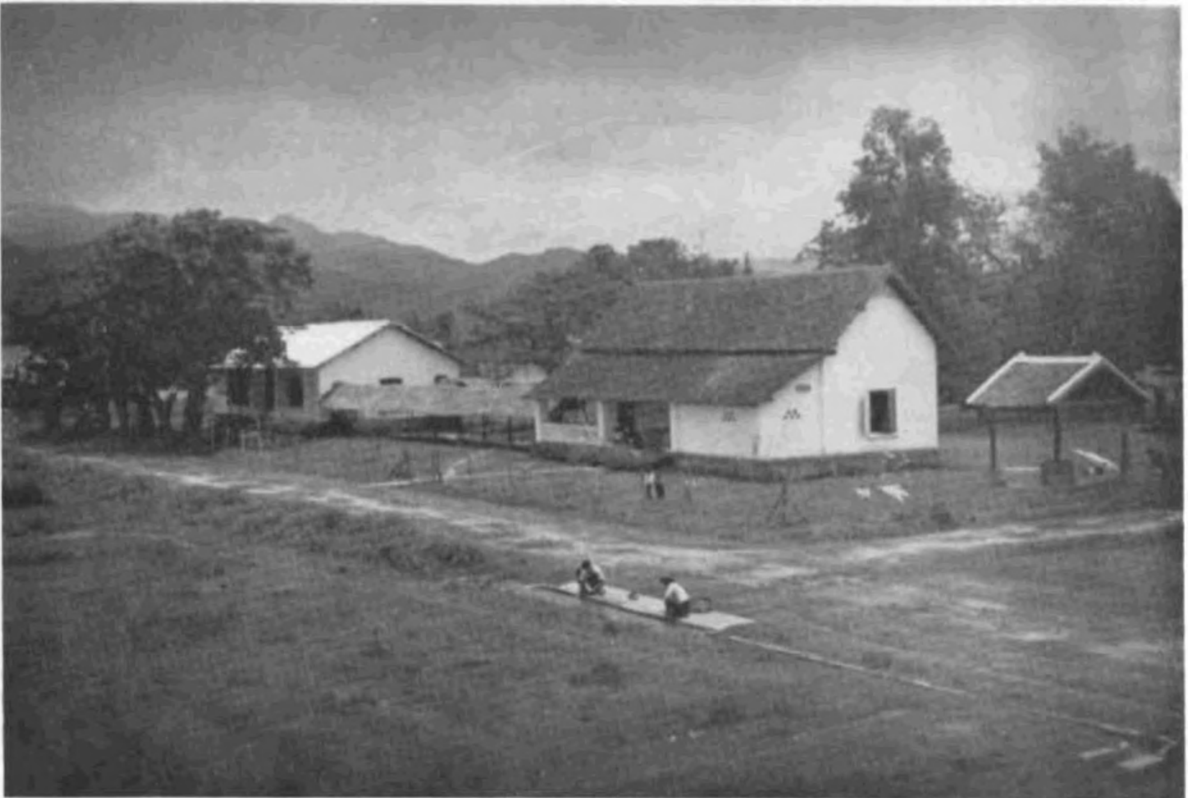
With men like him speaking in our behalf it took no time at all before we were a most accepted group in town. Within a few weeks people didn't even notice us in the market place. This was a pleasant thing. We wanted to become an intimate and integral part of the community life of the villagers. We had indeed with these people of the valley, but we wondered about the people of the mountain.

Good fortune shone on us. Only a few days after our arrival, a young man was brought to us whose face had been hideously mauled by a bear. This lad belonged to the high mountain tribe called the Kha Kho. The boy had a filthy wound and a huge hole in the cheek. You could shove two fingers into a yawning, foul-smelling wound just below the eye and the fingers poked out of the roof of his mouth. This pus-filled hole had been stuffed with tobacco and monkey fur. His right eye was torn loose and many of his teeth were broken. The whole upper jawbone was fractured in several places.

We had to do a series of operations on him, first removing the loosened maxillary plate. It took us several days of cleaning him up with antibiotics and daily washings in order to find what tissue was worth saving. We had to remove what was left of his lacerated eyeball. Then under general anesthesia we were able to loosen the good skin from around the jaw, the eye, the side of the nose, and the cheekbone. Without tension we pulled good tissue over and closed up the hole in his face. It healed well, leaving only a jagged scar. Though to us this still looked awful, to him it was a near miracle. From a miserable youngster with a hor-

ribly dirty, foul face, this lad had become quite an acceptable sight. We discharged him from the hospital but he returned in a few days with a very small dog. He got on his knees and held this dog up to us as an offering of gratitude. I smiled at him and said "*Cup Chai,*" and added, "*Het menh yanh.* What can I do with it?" The boy looked at me in surprise and responded, "Eat it." We were adopted into the Kha Kho family of men.

Many people became our friends. So did this little dog. Dwight named him Fang because he was so utterly harmless and cowardly. All of the children in our area called the dog Fang too. Occasionally Dwight would get angry, growl at the dog and say, "Come here, Fang, son of Claw." When the Asians would try to repeat that, the sound that came out was unprintable in Lao or English.



My favorite picture: our house and clinic in Muong Sing.
In the background a storm is gathering over Red China.

The daily sick-call line.

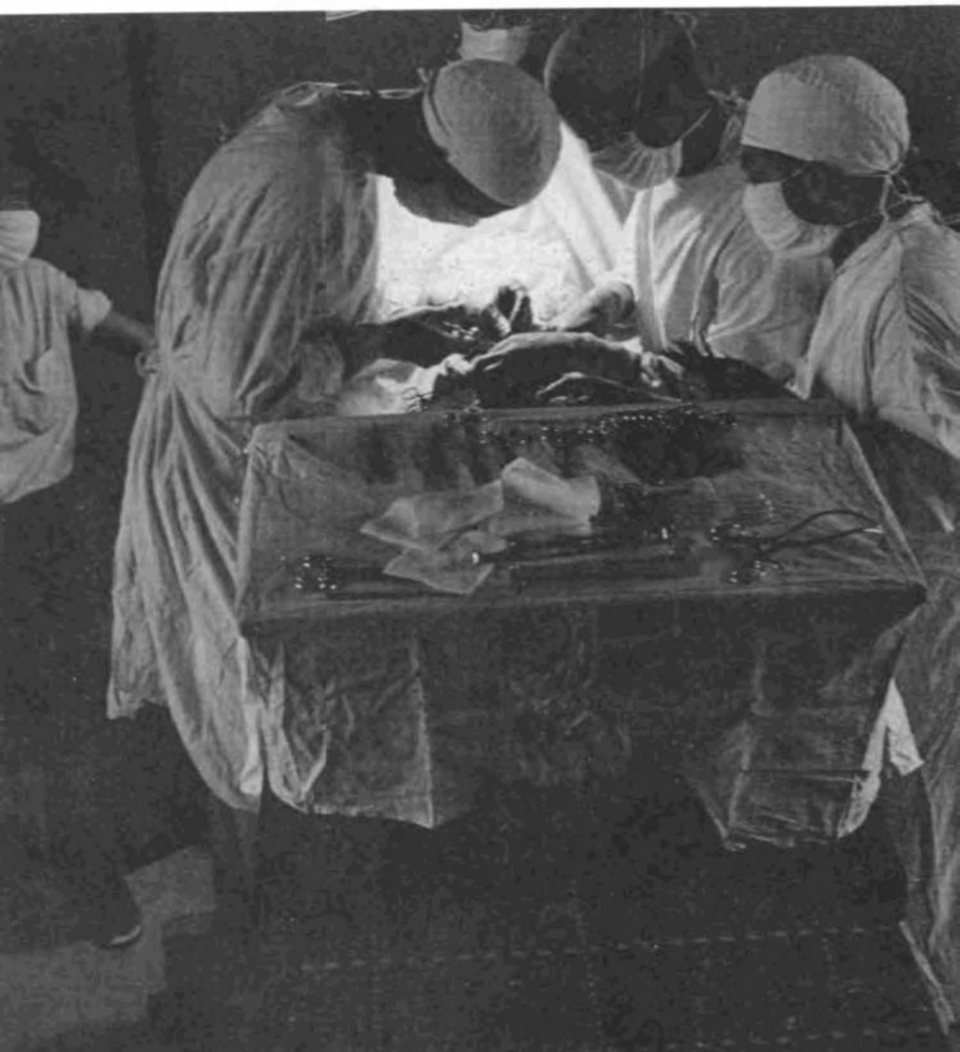
Family portrait: Earl, Dwight, Oui, Dooley, La and Si.

The doctor's post of honor in the clinic.

Dwight Davis takes the clinic line.

Doctor Schweitzer calls this a "confab."

Surgery.



Earl, Chai, Dooley and Dwight unload newly-arrived drugs, the gift of Pfizer.

Two Lao debutantes drop in for a visit—and so do two generations, grandmother and grandchild.

Little girls are the same the world over—and so are little boys, even young Buddhist monks.

"Will you help MEDICO to help Dr. Dooley to help me and my people to learn to help ourselves?"

Earl Rhine and his daily visitor (see Chapter 6).

Dwight Davis wearing Lao white cotton strings binding our nations together.

The brush isn't too good, but the toothpaste tastes fine.

A family scene in our backyard.

Left: Changtip and Oula refilling their midwife-kit.

Who outranks who?

The village market.

Family dinner: three languages, three races, one love.

A Mao tribesman, wasting away. He was floated down the river from Red China.

Dwight Davis with his favorite nurse, Changtip.

"It's this tooth, doctor."

A proud father makes payment for delivery of his first-born son.

The zinc-lined piano, my pride and joy, gift of the Wilson Club of General Electric, Bridgeport, Conn.

Mail call.

Studious Ngoan, a boy of the Black Thai tribe.

When a doctor feels helpless: a tiny life, which he knows will be brief.

A Kha Kho patient.