

## VILLAGES IN THAILAND

TO THE EDITOR:

Since my article on leprosy villages<sup>1</sup> was sent you, a letter written by Dr. Dharmendra has appeared [THE JOURNAL 22 (1954) 90]. I wrote my article because, after many years of observation of these villages, I felt that some of my conclusions should be recorded. I am aware that some of these conclusions are at variance with certain other opinions, like those of Dr. Dharmendra, but this does not alter the facts.

With respect to Dr. Dharmendra's letter, it should be pointed out that any reference to the Kengtung villages has no pertinence so far as concerns the prevention or the spreading of leprosy, because during the war there was a breakdown of all help to and supervision of these villages. As a result, perhaps one-half of the patients returned to their original homes, and the original setup for the spread of leprosy was therefore maintained. Only in the last three years have the villages been partially restored. Observations of less than five or ten years can hardly be of any value.

These villages are not set up as the perfect method of prevention, but as a sort of policy of doing something progressive rather than sitting still and talking about the large number of leprosy cases untreated and unattended. The central colony with 400-600 patients cannot be said to be dealing with the problem of over 5,000 cases of leprosy in the state of Kengtung.

Of the twenty villages in Thailand, fifteen are well isolated. Two of the others, which two were visited by Dr. Dharmendra, are reported on in detail in my article.

Dr. Robert G. Cochrane has recently spent a week with us and has seen all our work. His visit was very profitable to us. Although he saw much that could be improved upon with more adequate funds, there was little unfavorable criticism from him, but there was much helpful praise.

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