



Big Stone (Group C). *Photo by E. S. E.*

MEGALITHS IN BAYAB.

by

E. W. HUTCHINSON.

Mr. C. L. Miles, of the forest staff of The Borneo Company, Ltd., when travelling two years ago in the hilly country of the Me Ping rapids—the Saliam forest (ป่าสะเลียม)—between Chiengmai and Raheng, observed that some of the big stones, or rather, segments of rock, by the wayside appeared to have been planted upright in the soil in groups reminiscent of the megaliths and fairy-rings of Europe. Three groups were observed by him along the foot-path from Müang Hôt (เมืองฮอด) to Müang Tün (เมืองทัน), a short distance east of the point where it crosses the Huei Oom Pät (ห้วยอุมพาด). That crossing happens to be about one kilometre above the reputed site of a former Lawa settlement on the banks of the Huei Oom Pät, some 16 to 19 km. above the mouth of that stream.

The easiest way to visit the Stones is to take a boat along the Me Ping river as far as the mouth of the Oom Pät stream, at which place there are a few fishermen's huts on the west bank of the Me Ping—a short distance below Kô (ก่อ), but above the Company's bungalow at the mouth of the Saliam stream. From the mouth of the Oom Pät stream a path follows up it, past a small village, and then turns off in a north-eastward direction to join the track from Müang Hôt to Tün. On reaching this track the traveller turns west, and after walking in the direction of Tün for about one kilometre he encounters two groups of stones, about eleven metres apart—(groups A. & B.): another half kilometre brings him to the large group, (C.), which contains the biggest stone: yet another half kilometre brings him to the Oom Pät stream.

Mr. Miles left Siam before he had an opportunity to examine his discovery in detail. This task he abandoned to his successor, Mr. E. S. Ennals, who visited Oom Pāt this year in the dry season. Mr. Ennals has communicated to me the notes, measurements and photographs which he took during his visit, and which he has authorised me to make public. This article is composed exclusively of information received from him, a rough draft of it having been submitted to him and received his approval. I trust he will accept this acknowledgement of his kindness.

Mr. Ennals noticed that the loose rocks and boulders which abound in the neighbourhood of the stones had been cleared away in their immediate vicinity; the stones themselves appear to have been broken off from these rocks and boulders.

The most northerly group, (A), is in the form of an ellipse measuring 8'-6" in a straight line from the northernmost standing stone, which is 1'-9" high by 1'-1" broad, to the southernmost standing stone, which is 2'-0" high by 1'-0" broad. There are no stones west of these two, but between them on the eastern side, and forming an ellipse with them, is a standing stone, 2'-3" high by 1'-1" broad: the distance from it to the northernmost stone is four feet, and to the southernmost stone six feet: between it and the latter is a recumbent stone, 3'-5" × 1'-2". Behind these four stones are scattered many smaller ones, forming a background to them.

Group B. is only distant 37' to the south of Group A. It consists of three stones:— first, and southernmost, a recumbent stone, 2'-1" × 1'-6": in the middle, five and a half feet south of it, a standing stone, 2'-1" high by 1'-2": four feet north of it, another standing stone, 1'-11" high by 7".

Group C., the largest group, is half a kilometre west of groups A. and B. It consists of an elliptical ring measuring 79ft. from east to west, and 60ft. from north to south. On the south side of the ellipse are four recumbent stones only, two on its south-east edge, and two on its south-west edge. Towards the east end of the ellipse is a group of six stones, two standing, of which the largest measures 5'-6" high, 2'-0" broad, and 5" thick.

This standing stone is surrounded by four recumbent stones. The other standing stone is 26ft south and 9ft east of it. The north-east side of the ellipse contains four recumbent stones: the north-west

Group B.

Group A.

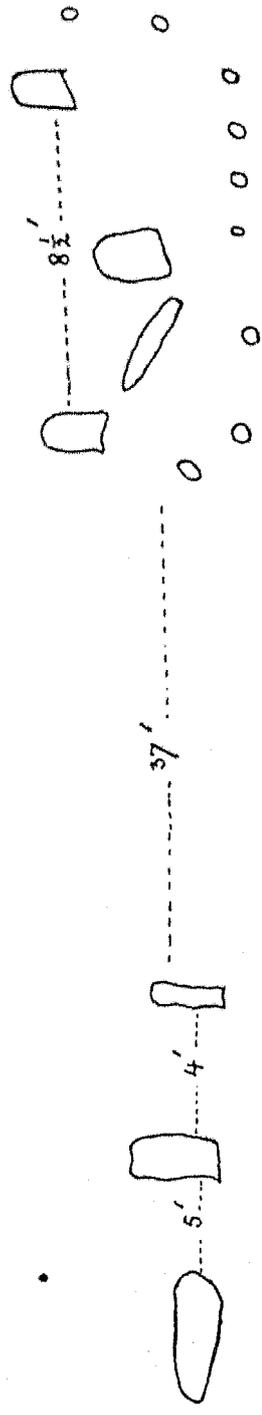
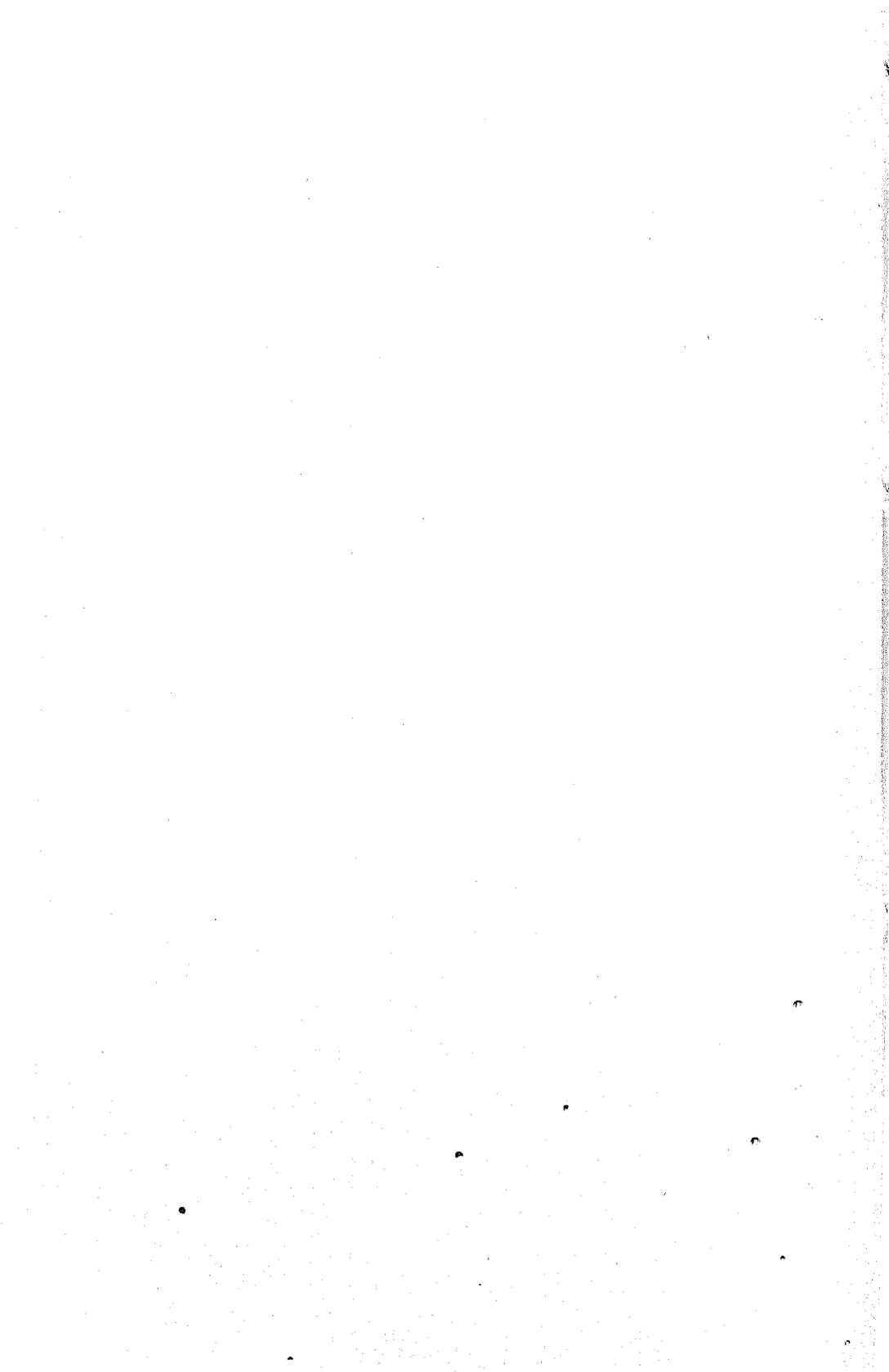
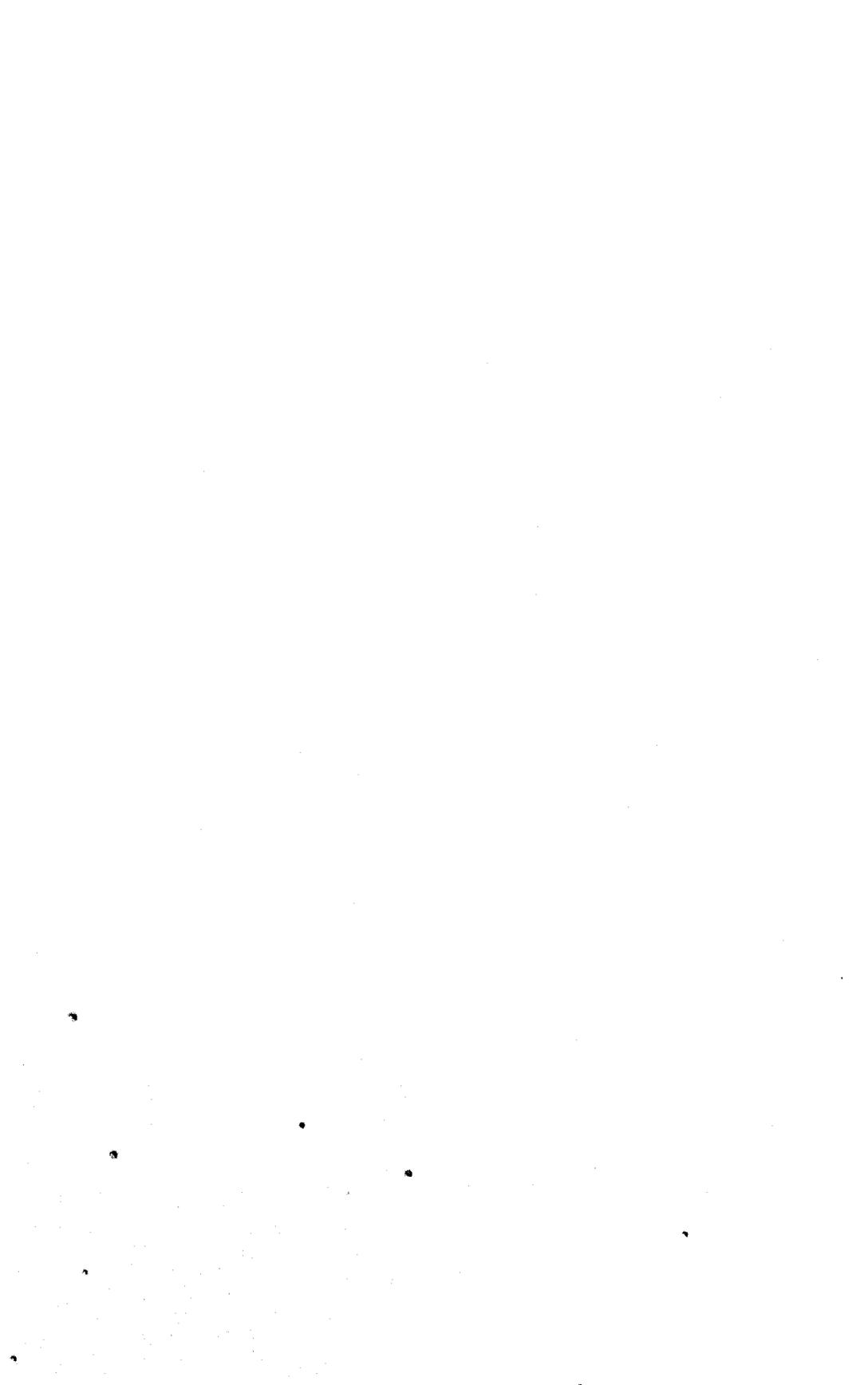
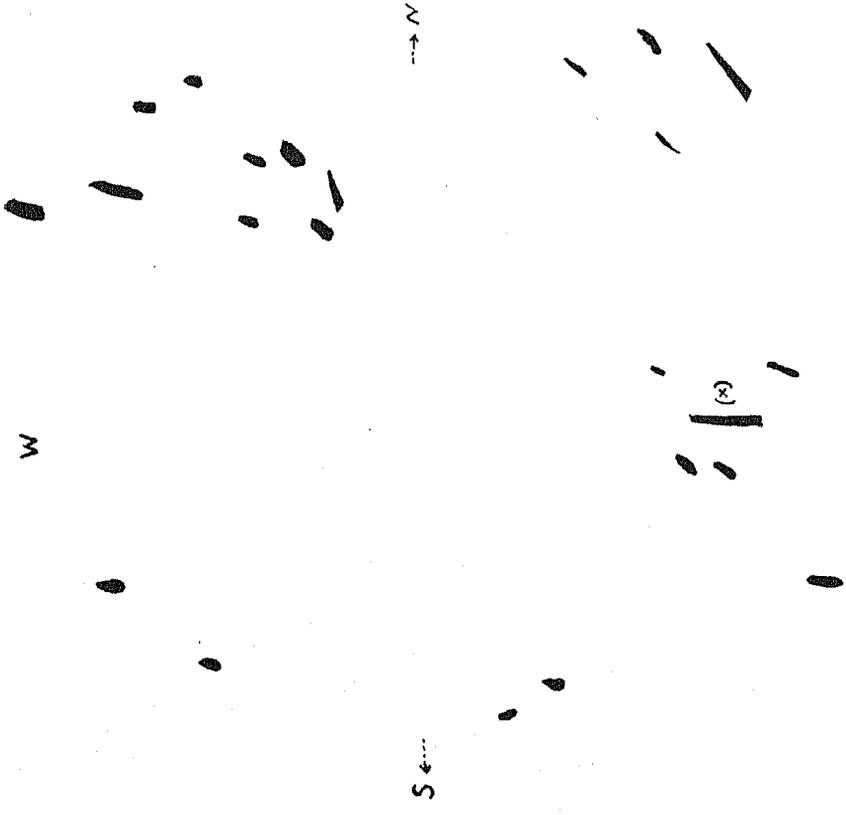


Photo 'B' Taken from
this point = 35' distant

Plan of Megaliths, groups A. and B.







Group C.

23 stones.

- (x) The big standing stone.
- 5 1/2' high.
- 2' broad.
- 3" thick.

E-W, about 79 ft.
N-S, about 60 ft.

Plan of Megaliths, group C.

side, eight recumbent and one standing stone. Group C. thus contains a total of twenty-three stones.

The presence of these stones in desolate country, far removed from human habitation, is likely to attract the attention of the rare passer-by, and to puzzle him to find any explanation of their significance.

A. and B. groups, on account of their proximity, may perhaps be regarded as a single group; but the existence of an even larger group, C., half a kilometre away suggests that there was some connection between groups A. B. and C. Since the nearest water is half a kilometre from group C. and double that distance from A. and B. it is doubtful, to say the least of it, if they ever marked the site of human habitation: at the same time, the relative proximity of a former Lawa settlement on the bank of the Oom Pât stream suggests the possibility that the Lawa were responsible for the stones. It is true that the Lawa recently examined at Bô Luang, between Hôt and Me Sarieng, do not make use of megaliths, either to mark their burial grounds or their places of animistic worship; but those Lawa differ in language from the Lawa of the Me Lao valley in Chiengrai province, as well as from those of Oom Pai (Umpai) in the Me Sarieng drainage N. W. of Bô Luang, who have been visited this year by the Rev. John Holladay, who is preparing a memorandum of his visit.

Further light may be thrown upon this interesting subject if and when an opportunity occurs for a systematic investigation of the sites of reputed Lawa settlements both in Oom Pât, and lower down the Me Ping rapids at Oom Khoi (ອຸມໂຄຍ)—Oom (ອຸມ) being a Lawa word for water, just as it is in the Khamu speech.

Meanwhile, hearty thanks are due to Mr. E. S. Ennals for his careful observations.

Chiengmai, 6th June, 1938.

