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Cover: The catafalque of Phra Phetracha's funerary procession, 26 December 1704, as drawn by an unknown contemporary artist. Courtesy of the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Collection of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, Dresden State Art Collections). Photography by Maria Aranda Alonso. Special thanks to Dr Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick and Dr Cordula Bischoff.

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# The Tai Original Diaspora

Grant Evans<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Some twenty-five years ago, the issue of the deep origins of the Tai was a hot topic of academic debate. Now it has disappeared. The preoccupations of Tai or Thai Studies have significantly changed over time. Here I want to return to a discussion of where the Tai came from and when did they first move out into the world. In a recent article (Evans 2014), I have shown that the Tai did not come from Nan Chao, yet Nan Chao played an important role in their story. Here I will look further at the role of the Tai in the making of Southeast Asia from the perspective of what I have called ‘areal anthropology’, which is an attempt to break out of nationalist conceptions of what, for example, the Lao are. In a review of Wolters (Evans 2002), I used the term ‘culture area.’ The problem with that term is that it has the same problems as the word ‘culture’, only writ large. The problem is boundaries: how do you draw a boundary around a culture? That is a preoccupation of most who talk about cultures. Areal anthropology can be thought of as analogous to area linguistics, which talks about the formation of languages in relation to other languages. Areal anthropology means talking about the formation of a culture in relation to other cultures, not talking about boundaries but about the shared relationships between adjacent groups of people, and the degree to which there are no clear boundaries. It is not possible to say ‘This is Thai culture, this is Lao culture,’ although there are certain elements which are more strongly emphasised in one group as against another. Areal anthropology explores the many shared elements of culture which spread across different ethnic groups, such as the evolution of mythologies.

There is no such thing as an original, pure Tai culture, though the idea of some such thing has been very strong, both in Thailand and Laos.

On the issue of the origins of the Thai or Tai, the historical linguists set the running

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<sup>1</sup> Keynote speech at the 12th International Conference on Thai Studies, Sydney, 24 April 2014. Grant Evans died in Vientiane on 16 September 2014. The text of the speech was retrieved from Grant’s computer by Keomany Somvandy and Jim Chamberlain. This text had no introduction. Phil Hirsch provided an audio recording of the speech as delivered in Sydney. The introduction to this article is an edited transcription from this recording. The remainder of the article comes from the written text, with the addition of one short paragraph (the first following the subheading: The Tai diaspora in Vietnamese records) based on the spoken version; the movement of one paragraph; and the deletion of one sentence (for repetition). Grant’s speech in Sydney followed the written text, although greatly condensed, but without the final section on “Everyday Migration.” For help in reconstructing the references and citations, thanks go to Li Tana, Charles Holcombe, Nitnoi Faming, Simon Creak, Jim Chamberlain, Catherine Churchman, Siang Bacthi, Geoff Wade, Michel Lorrillard, Liam Kelley, Pittayawat Pittayaporn, Alexis Michaud, and Michel Ferlus.

during the late 20th century. They argued that the existence of a variety of Tai dialects and languages in Guangxi and Guangzhou provinces, plus the more distantly related Kadai languages, pointed to the Tai homeland. The argument was developed by William Gedney, Li Fang-Kuei, James Chamberlain and others. Gedney postulated the existence of a Proto-Tai language at some time between 1,500 and 2,000 years ago. This may be roughly right. According to plant geneticists, sticky rice, which is an upland variety that has to be actively selected, emerged at around the same period, and the zone where sticky rice is grown coincides closely with the northern settlements of Tai groups, including the Lao.

The early limit of Gedney's estimate lands in the middle of the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE), while the later limit falls in the Sui dynasty (581-618 CE), just prior to the powerful Tang dynasty from the 7th to 10th centuries CE. This timing contrasts with the theories of W.C. Dodd (1923), Wiens (1954), and other early scholars who claimed that the Tai had occupied all of China, well before the Chinese, and were in Dodd's phrase, the 'elder brother of the Chinese'. Gedney's estimate makes the Tai a rather new people on the world stage.

Gedney noted the great variety of dialects within the region. Tai groups living only forty or fifty kilometres apart in Guangxi province could not communicate directly with each other. When they got together, they spoke Chinese.

The problem with the historical linguists' idea of a proto-language is that they give an impression that such a language actually existed rather than being a theoretical and heuristic concept for understanding what the common characteristics of such a language would be if it was going to evolve in a particular direction.

The linguists' timeframe is reasonably well established, but the emergence of the language itself remains a mystery. At some point in time, it simply emerges. The linguists have almost nothing to say about culture. Gedney says only that the culture in which the Proto-Tai language emerged was not very different from traditional peasant culture as known in the area today.

The Bai-yi was a large region encompassing Guangdong, Guangxi, Guangzhou and perhaps parts of what is now North Vietnam. It was an area of immense ethnic diversity prior to the invasions by the Chin and then the Han dynasty. To the Chinese, it was totally foreign, full of 'barbarians'. Ramsay wrote that it was as ethnically and linguistically diverse as Southeast Asia or Papua New Guinea. The Chinese invasions were ferocious affairs, which probably brought about the total destruction of many smaller groups. With the arrival of the Chinese, the region became a large frontier zone, where a wide range of diglossia, or frontier languages, emerged, usually a pidgin mixing of Middle Chinese with local languages. Both Tai dialects and several Chinese languages emerged out of this situation of contact. Cantonese, for example, emerged under the Tang dynasty through contact with Tai languages, and Hakka emerged out of contact with the Yao, who were also an important group in the zone.

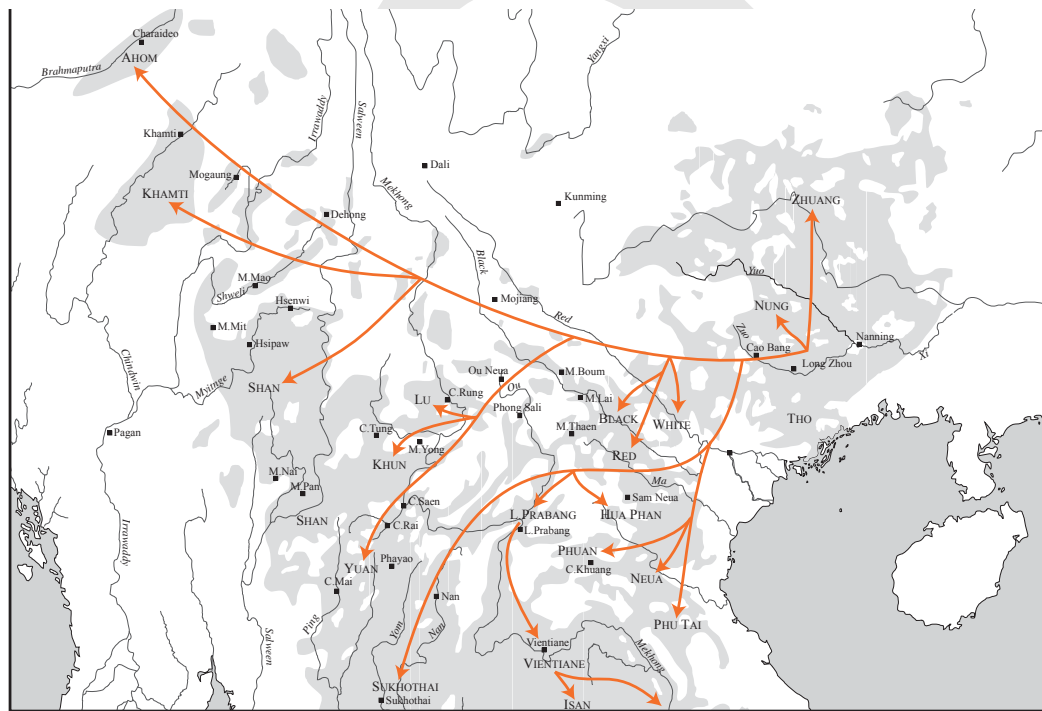
Thus Tai does not emerge in a pristine form, as it appears in the linguists' version, but through a complex interaction between several languages, including Yao, varieties of Chinese, and so on. The soldiers in the Chinese armies were not all speakers of Mandarin (Putonghua). The Chinese deliberately recruited ethnic groups in the path

of their armies. Pidgin languages would have been created for communication within these armies. Several types of Tai would thus have emerged simultaneously in different parts of the region. The cultural and ethnic mixing in this frontier zone was immensely complex.

Early Chinese sources identify groups with terms like Yue, Huang and Nong. These terms sound like Chinese surnames. The Chinese applied these forms of identification from early on. A term like Zhuang emerges only later, during the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE), from a word with a primary meaning of ‘mercenary soldier’. Only since 1949 has the term Zhuang become established as a description of Tai groups in the region. Among the Zhuang, there is still great diversity.

According to Bob Bauer, the first writing of a Tai language appeared around the 7th century using Chinese characters to render Tai words in phonetical form. David Holm (2004) made a detailed analysis of some ritual texts, showing they had already been heavily influenced by Taoism and by a type of Chinese Buddhism. They were already deeply influenced by Chinese civilisation.

Let me now move on to the diaspora, referring to the map below, which was created by Chris Baker (2002) based on the work by James Chamberlain. I will concentrate on just one part of the map at the eastern end.



The take-off point of the Tai diaspora lay in Guangxi province. The movement occurred in three main phases. The first came with the advent of the Tang dynasty in the 7th century, and its attempts to exert stronger control in Guangxi and Guangdong provinces. This led in 756 CE to a massive revolt involving not only many Tai, but several other groups that were probably obliterated. Some 200,000 combatants came together to reject Chinese domination while instituting everywhere prefects and other

functionaries to replace the Chinese organisation. They invaded eighteen *cho* (districts) of Guangxi, marking their passage by burning and taking many captives. This situation went on for several years, propelling the first wave of migration out of the region.

The second phase came with the Nan Chao invasion of northern Vietnam over a decade in the middle of the 9th century. From Dali, the Nan Chao army swept down to around Hanoi, and then westward to occupy Nanning. When the Tang forces then pushed the Nan Chao army back, the area was almost completely depopulated. As I have argued elsewhere (Evans 2014), indigenous Tai people would have been swept up into the Nan Chao armies and, no doubt, many of them were carried back into Nan Chao territory as a result. Communications with their home areas, however, are unlikely to have been completely broken, and such movements of people doubtless thus provided information about what lay beyond their own territory. But more importantly, the Nan Chao provided a protective umbrella vis-a-vis the Chinese that allowed Tai groups something like ‘safe passage’ across the north of mainland Southeast Asia.

The third wave came with the Nong Zhi-gao revolt in the mid-11th century, which I shall describe in more detail.

### The Nong Zhi-gao revolt

The Qin and the Han expansion into the south wiped out many local communities physically or forced them to move, while others were engulfed and then gradually Sinicised. Giao-chi, the commandery established by the Han on the Red River Delta coast, became a flourishing entrepot for international trade and for trade in rice to Guangzhou. Indeed, until the end of the Han dynasty it boasted a higher population than the latter. However, Guangzhou would eclipse Giao-chi as the empire’s main foreign trade port after that. Northern settlers streamed into both regions.

Much of the early contact between Guangzhou and Giao-chi was by sea because the overland route was difficult and obstructed by aggressive ‘Li’ and ‘Lao’ barbarians. Michael Churchman chooses to see these people as ‘Tai-Kadai’, but while it is clear that the Tai peoples (who were in the process of formation in this Han period) were numerous, there were also many other groups as well. As Holcombe (1997-98: 144) observes, “In the fifth century ‘many kinds’ of Li 里 and Liao [Lao] 獠 tribes occupied the mountains of Guangzhou. The Li people lived scattered in independent villages in the mountains through wide regions of Guangdong and Guangxi,” there were the ‘cannibalistic Wuhu 烏滸’ and “the ‘wild Wenlang’ 文郎野人 who slept in the forest without permanent homes, ate raw meat, and gathered incense for trade.” Ten thousand Wuhu reportedly surrendered to the imperial forces in 170 CE, but “Eight years later... Wuhu from Jiaozhi [Giao-chi] and Hepu commanderies sparked a four year rebellion involving tens of thousands of people in all of the commanderies to their south and west.” And there is an endless stream of reports about the intransigence of various communities, where households numbering in the tens of thousands refused to ‘submit’ (Churchman, 2011: 71-2).

However, the geography of Guangxi was formidable, with mountains covering some 75 per cent of the province, while less than 15 per cent were plains dotted with



spectacular karst formations. The many rivers provided transport, but the main arteries ran from the north-west to the south-east. Only along the coast was the land relatively flat, and here the Chinese gathered first. The mainland route went through the ‘Ghost Gate Pass’ until Tang times, and it was a route that left the hinterland of Guangxi relatively untouched and where the Han imperial presence was characterised by isolated fortified strongholds. “The keys to Lingnan were the twin cities at Guangzhou and Jiaozhi [Giao-chi] (Jiaozhou). In-between these two urban strongholds lay large stretches of wilderness, especially in what are now Guangxi and southern Guangdong provinces, inhabited by only partially assimilated tribesmen” (Holcombe, 1997-98: 148). This situation remained as dynasties rose and fell after the fall of the Han Dynasty, but with the rise of the Tang dynasty “a vigorous initial effort was made to incorporate native tribal groups into Chinese-style urban-centred prefectures. In 638, along the western frontier of Lingnan and the approaches to modern Vietnam, 3,667 households of Man people were organized into Longzhou, 1,666 households of Yi and Liao people were organized into Rangzhou, and unspecified number of Man people into Huanzhou, and 285 households of Yi and Liao into Guzhou. Tianzhou was established out of so-called grotto-Man tribes in the early eighth century, and Yanzhou from the Liao in 677” (Holcombe 1997-98: 147). These attempts by the Tang to press the local peoples into the imperial regime disrupted local power bases as well as social and economic activities, and consequently were resisted and resented.

While it is highly probable that the indigenous political systems were prone to warring among themselves, the arrival of the Chinese added a new and, probably at first, unfathomable element to this warfare. Moreover, their presence sometimes allowed indigenous forces to use them in their battles with rivals. Thus, the ‘Hoang tribe’, which had been growing in strength in the mid-6th century, attacked the ‘tribes’ of the Wei, Chou and Nong, ‘driving them to the sea-shore’ (Ma, 1883: 237). This was followed by uprisings of the ‘chiefs of the Si-Youen-Man’ (Si-Youen being an older name for Guangxi) across the region in 756 C.E. “These kings coalesced, bringing together forces of 200,000 combatants, to reject Chinese domination, while instituting everywhere prefects and other functionaries to replace the Chinese organization. They invaded 18 *chou* 州 [districts] of the government of Guangxi, marking their passage by burning and taking with them numerous captives. This situation went on for four years until it could be remedied” (Ma, 1883: 238), partly by inducing some of the rebels to join the Chinese forces. However, rebellions on different scales continued and the Tang instituted the *jimi* system, which recognised the local authority of some chieftains and thereby incorporated them into the imperial system, as a way of trying to control these frontier regions. There is at least one report of the ‘Nong tribe’ attempting to gain support from the Nan Chao kingdom of Yunnan in the mid-9th century in their struggles with the Chinese, but the Emperor himself was able to make an alliance with the Nan Chao, and so, “This politics of opposing one rival tribe against another bore fruit” (Ma, 1883: 245).

But the relationship with the kingdom of Nan Chao itself was fragile and in 861, with the support of upland indigenous leaders, many of them probably Tai, Nan Chao attacked the Chinese protectorate of Annam, capturing Hanoi and then withdrawing. It was the first of several attacks, with the one in 863 appearing to have the aim of

permanent occupation. In 861, they also struck at Yung-chou (Nanning) in Guangxi, and when the Tang forces arrived after their withdrawal, “they found the region to have been desolated, with only a small fraction of its inhabitants still there” (Backus, 1981: 152). This region was attacked several times by the Nan Chao and its local allies up until 864 when a major Tang campaign against them began, and finally succeeded in expelling the Nan Chao soldiers in late 866. The consequences for the indigenous people, who had helped their campaign, are enumerated in the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (1990: 16): “the indigenous people who had shown the way for the Nan Chao troops, more than 30,000 were decapitated... the two indigenous territories that sided with the Nan Chao were razed and their chiefs executed.” No doubt these reprisals were directed against many people who were Tai.

As the Tang dynasty went into decline, imperial power, naturally, waned on its periphery, and during the so-called ‘Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms’ period (907-60) in the Nan Yue, various leaders saw an opportunity to claim power for themselves – most significantly and successfully in Vietnam.

In the watershed of the Left River, which flowed towards Nanning from the frontier region above Cao Bang in Vietnam, were many settlements of Tai peoples called Nong 農人 by the Chinese. Tai leaders in this region, which overlapped into the modern province of Yunnan had, according to some sources, received titles from the Nan Chao / Dali kingdom and so, when officials from the ascendant Song Dynasty (960-1279) entered the region, they found chiefs whose status had already been bolstered by outside connections (Anderson, 2007: 75). Furthermore, within the imperial system it was a region that was in the bailiwick of Giao-chi, and at that time the Vietnamese court was asserting its status outside the inner realms of this system. In these frontier regions, chiefs could often look both ways, towards the Song and towards the Vietnamese. The Song recognised the Tai leader of this region, Nong Dan Phu, as having *neifu* status, i.e., protection of the empire under a Chinese military commander, and he passed this status onto his son, Nong Quan-fu, who became a powerful figure partly through his control of the trade in alluvial gold from the region. His power grew and he expanded the territory under his control, apparently by killing other local chiefs who were his kin. He “proclaimed himself emperor Chiêu-thanh, and gave the title of empress to [his wife] A Nùng, and named his son Trí Thông prince Nam Nha, transformed the district into a kingdom Truong-Sinh, made military preparations, built forts for protection, and ceased to offer the tribute of a vassal” (Nguyen, 1990: 23). The Vietnamese court quickly cut his ambitions short, sending an expeditionary force to crush this rebellion. “The rebels were brought in cages to the capital. The fortifications made by them destroyed, and the survivors of the tribe brought together and pacified” (Nguyen, 1990: 23). Nong Quan-fu, many of his family and officers were executed.

His wife, A Nong, however, escaped with their young son, Nong Zhi-gao, who would go on to lead the largest Tai-led rebellion in the southern region. His mother remarried a rich merchant, who Zhi-gao killed as a young man, allegedly declaring that one “can have only one father”. This, perhaps apocryphal story, marked Zhi-gao as exceptional, but in contradictory ways: firstly, it demonstrated filial piety, but secondly, it also demonstrated the opposite – and indeed, some Chinese sources claim the merchant



was his father (Ma, 1883: 247). It is the stuff of which legends are made. Yet, it is true that A-Nong went on to marry her third husband, a Tai chief in the prefecture of Temo, near the current Yunnan border. It was from here, on the margins of imperial power, that Zhi-gao later rose up several times, most spectacularly in 1052 when his snowballing army of recruits from across Guangxi and Guangdong reached the outskirts of Guangzhou and laid siege to it. After his first major victory at Nanning, he declared the founding of the Great Southern Kingdom, granted himself the title of Benevolent and Kind Emperor, while his mother took the title ‘empress dowager’, and he called for a realm that was unconstrained by tributary ties.

Until this time he had tried to negotiate a place in the Song *jimi* system, but was rebuffed by the Song, who were wary of usurping the prerogatives within the imperial system of the already assertive Vietnamese, who had made it clear that they would not tolerate too much chiefly autonomy on their frontier. Perhaps the Nan Chao/Dali kingdom suggested one kind of autonomous kingdom to Zhi-gao, and apparently even Chao T’o’s *Nan Yue* was an inspiration in 1052. But in the substantial literature on the Nong Zhi-gao rebellion, no one has pointed to what seems to be a millennial strain in his campaign. It began, reportedly, with Zhi-gao ordering his followers to burn their villages: “Heaven has destroyed all that you have here. Its will is manifest and we will become masters of the countries of Yong [Guangxi] and of Kuang [Guangdong]. Each one of us should therefore take up arms in combat, and to the death if necessary” (Ma, 1883: 250). Apparently, the movement of his troops in rags caused the Chinese to ignore the threat. The establishment of a new kingdom, *Ta-nan* (Great South), and the decree that the years of his reign would be called *ki-li*, i.e. the opening of a new calendar, all suggest the arrival of a new kingdom on earth – perhaps not unlike what the region would see with the Taiping rebellion hundreds of years later. One might suggest that this millennial strain that ran through the rebellion produced the synergy for this mighty outburst of energy. Anderson (2007: 101), however, considers Zhi-gao’s speech “more of a literary device” of the Chinese chroniclers “than a statement of historical fact”, but this leaves him struggling for an answer as to why Zhi-gao chose to rebel.

Studies of millenarianism have pointed out that it flourishes in times of social and cultural dislocation, which was certainly the case in Guangxi in the 11th century. Under the Tang, the state had sought to tighten its control over local societies through the *jimi* system which, unsurprisingly, benefited some groups more than others. Moreover, Chinese migration south was continuous, if temporarily uneven, and each military campaign against rebels, at their completion, left behind military colonies, all of which disturbed local societies. “Although there seem to be no estimates for the Zhuang-Han population ratio in the Song, in the Tang it was thought that seventy per cent of the local people were ‘barbarian’ and thirty per cent Han” (Barlow, 1987: 258). The political vacuum, opened up by the decline of the Tang, allowed the rise of leaders promising a new beginning, and added to the sense of time being out of joint. The opening for change, which Vietnam grasped, soon closed however.

The collapse of the Tang sent a flood of refugees into the south. As Ramsay (1997: 33) carefully observes:

Among these immigrants were elite families who were protected by well-organized

armies and followed by dispossessed peasants. Such groups formed the social and administrative core of the kingdoms that were subsequently established in the South, and these Sinitic kingdoms in turn provided the base for the complete assimilation of the South into Inner China when China was reunified by the Song.

It was in the face of a tide of northern immigrants that Zhi-gao attempted to carve a new kingdom out of Song territory, and the latter soon mobilised its army to crush the attempt, and Zhi-gao himself would finally flee to Dali where his demise remains obscure.

But it is interesting to ponder the reasons for the success of the Vietnamese in establishing an independent kingdom at this time, compared with Zhi-gao's ill-fated rebellion. A substantial number of the elite families in Giao-chi were Chinese immigrants, who spoke a language which could be called Annamese Middle Chinese, and who were well-versed in Chinese statecraft. By the 10th century, however, they were increasingly isolated from intercourse with the north and thus "began a process of merging with and shifting into the prestige version of Proto-Viet-Muong, a process that produced what we can recognize as the Vietnamese language" (Taylor, 2013: 50). By contrast, Zhi-gao and his followers were only familiar with the Chinese imperial system through the institution of the *jimi*, and even though his proclamations mimicked a Chinese model, it seems clear that they still had little grasp of how to create a state for themselves. Indeed, it is even unclear what the *lingua franca* of this movement may have been. While the majority of his followers were Tai, it is not at all obvious that they therefore communicated mainly in Tai given the relative newness of this language family, and furthermore, like most armies, it would have been multi-ethnic. The Yao, for instance, were a significant part of the population. So, communication may have been mainly in Pinghua, for instance. The Chinese sources, unfortunately, are completely silent on such matters.

Of course, the rebellion caused tremendous disruption and loss of life, not least as a result of Chinese reprisals. The 13th century chronicler, Fan Chi Hou, noted:

The old family of the Hoang are still numerous. That of the Nong, to the contrary, have almost disappeared. This happened after the pacification of the troubles caused by Nong Zhi-gao, and the family Nong having shown their fidelity to the emperor were authorised to take the name of the family of the reigning dynasty. There are still a small number of indigenous people in the country who have conserved the name Nong, but many more are now called Zhao [the emperor's family name] (cited in Ma, 1883: 261-2).

Obviously, many people known as Nong took flight, along with many others either involved in the rebellion, or who were fleeing it and its aftermath.

## The Tai diaspora

The Tai who migrated into mainland Southeast Asia were speakers of what linguists call South-western Tai. Geddes is inclined to include Central Tai with South-western Tai, leaving northern Tai as a distinct dialect, including what is known today as northern Zhuang, Buyi, and others. Linguists have suggested that the main features of this dialect were in place before the migrations began, and that the spread of these Tai across the northern boundary of mainland Southeast Asia, and down its valleys and rivers to the south occurred rapidly, within the space of a few hundred years, thereby ensuring that the differentiations within this dialect would not be so great as to inhibit communication.

We have already noted what appears to be resistance to early Tang expansion in areas that would have been mainly Tai, and perhaps it was then that large groups or even whole villages began to trek away from the Chinese frontier. There had been, of course, deep historical contacts between Guangxi and northern Vietnam with the interior of Yunnan. The Dian kingdom, situated just south of modern Kunming in the period from the 4th to the 1st century B.C. “appears to have been... in contact with the contemporary cultures of southern China (Yue) and of North Vietnam (Đông-son). It is probable that the states of Yunnan, of southern China and of north Indochina constituted, at the end of the 1st millennium before our era, a kind of cultural confederation, in the interior of which were all kinds of influences” (Pirazzoli-t’Serstevens, 1974: 1-2). Dian was not Tai, as some have speculated, but associated with Tibeto-Burman peoples. Nevertheless, it is perhaps from here that the knowledge of bronze drum making spread across the region and was adopted by many different groups, including the precursors of the Tai. They remained important symbols of power among the indigenous groups, and among the Li and the Lao, or the Lilao, up into Tang times whose sources speak of them as “placing great value on bronze drums” that are “found everywhere throughout the twenty-five commanderies” of Lingnan (Holm, 2003: 165; also Churchman, 2011: 74-79).

We are not dealing with totally isolated communities but, in fact, a regional system. Indeed, northern Indochina-Guangxi can be considered the terminus point of the southern Silk Road that ran through Dali, and merchants followed the Red River that began in Yunnan down to the south-west. Goods and ideas from the Southern Silk Road travelled north-east through Dali into central China, but no doubt some also travelled down the Red River route. We are not talking about large numbers of people or major caravans of goods on the move. The terrain was difficult – as French engineers discovered when they built a train route from Hanoi to Kunming paralleling the Red River in the 19th century – yet one can imagine an adventurous, solitary Tai person making their way as far as India at this time, although it is unlikely.

There is no ‘exodus’ narrative to be found among the Tai. Only in the late 19th century was such a narrative concocted by Europeans, one that claimed the Thai/Lao people had fled south from the kingdom of Nan Chao in north-western Yunnan to populate the lands of modern Thailand and Laos. This narrative was adopted and propagated by Thai historians and educators, and by the Lao too. It still has currency in Laos, but less so in Thailand. However, research has shown that the Kingdom of Nan

Chao was not Tai (Evans 2014).

Instead, what one finds among the ‘tribal’ Tai and the Lao are legends of the creation of humans by Gods, and the foundation of chiefdoms or kingdoms by their descendants. The adoption of Buddhism by Tai groups saw such stories reconfigured by Buddhist narratives. The creation of Buddhist kingdoms by the Tai opened up a cultural gap between them and the non-Buddhist Tai in Vietnam and southern China.

The people called Tho and Nung along the Vietnamese border with China are cultural extensions of the southern Zhuang in Guangxi, and were largely contained to their south by the Vietnamese. However, in the mountains further to the west, the Red River, the Black River and the Ma River were like highways for the Tai into the highlands that lie between Vietnam and Laos, and they were clearly once the initial routes out of Guangxi and south-eastern Yunnan. These rivers are usually cited at the beginning of the important Black Tai legend, the *Khwaam To Muang*, where a region encompassing nine rivers is referred to:

Heaven had the form of a large mushroom made of seven pieces of land, three blocks of stone, and nine rivers among which were the Nam Tao (Red River), the Nam-U and the Nam Khong (Mekong). (Roux and Tran 1935: 1041).

The details of each legend, however, are different even though they have been written down, thus stabilising the tale somewhat. For example, a version of the *Khwaam To Muang* which survives among Black Tai, who migrated to north-eastern Thailand and are known as Tai Song, runs:

Recall, in ancient times there was earth and grass,  
In ancient times the sky was like a mushroom,  
In ancient times there were seven mountains,  
In ancient times there was bore water,  
In ancient times there were three stone columns,  
In ancient times there were nine rivers,  
In ancient times there was the mouth of the Black River, the Red River, the U River  
and the Mekong River. (Thawi 2010: 44-5).

And it goes on to speak about how the earth in the beginning was empty. This version, edited by Thawi Swangpanyangkoon, is similar to a version produced in Iowa by Black Tai refugees (Tai Studies Center 1999). A composite version of the *Khwaam To Muang* has been produced by Vietnamese scholars (Đặng Nghiêm Vạn et al., 1977), and Jim Chamberlain (1992) has produced an annotated version from Muang Mouay in Vietnam.

But by the very nature of the society that produced these texts there can be no definitive version. The Vietnamese version, while very useful, reflects the mindset of a modern national state setting out to establish a ‘national literature’, with accredited versions of various texts.<sup>2</sup> A centralised state can try to do this, but there was never

<sup>2</sup> Jim Chamberlain dismisses the usefulness of this redaction: “The main weakness is that everything

any Black Tai state or Black Tai ‘Ministry of Culture’ that could do this. The versions varied according to the particular conditions of the local Tai societies in which they were embedded. It is worth noting that none of them would have been written down before the 16th century, after which there was a Tai script shared (mostly) among the White, Black and Red Tai (Maspero 1911: 157; see also Ferlus 2006a). Ferlus notes that the manuscripts were written on ‘Chinese paper’: “These manuscripts were never very old, no more than one or two centuries. They deteriorated due to use and had to be re-copied periodically... [however] modifications could be introduced through re-copying. The knowledge of writing was transmitted only in the families of the notables, there was no schooling, and therefore no norms” (Ferlus 2006a: 219).

Charles Archaimbault writes about the problems associated with the chronicles of Muang Phuan, a small kingdom formed by Tai migrants in Xieng Khwang and which retained much in common with their non-Buddhist fellows further east. The Lao annals, he said, were an “incoherent mélange of miscellaneous bits and pieces. More than the other annals, those of Muang P’uon [Phuan] present to the historian such problems” (1967: 558). This, as he writes, was a product of wars that have swept across the region, and the attitude towards history of those who wrote them. He goes on: “The annals of Muang P’uon that retrace the history of the muang since its origins up to the establishment of the French protectorate contain in fact, like all the Lao annals, very little historical material and when they refer to events prior to the 19th century whose existence is corroborated by the Vietnamese or Siamese annals, they are not situated in time at all” (Archaimbault 1967: 559). The annals, he concludes, are really only useful for studying the ‘religious structures’ of Xieng Khwang. This critical assessment of annals that were overseen by a state with a literate religious tradition, suggests even greater wariness when assessing the historical value of, say, the *Khwaam To Muang*.

#### *The Tai diaspora in Vietnamese records*

Another major source on the movement of the Tai is the Vietnamese annals, including the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*, the history of the Great Viet, compiled in the 13th century and updated in the 15th century.

Because Tai are not explicitly referred to in the early Vietnamese records we can only infer, primarily from the location, that Tai peoples must have been involved in revolts or other events set down in the annals. It would be inaccurate to infer that all the upland revolts recorded in the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* are exclusively Tai. The mountains were also inhabited by Austroasiatic groups and perhaps even some Yao, but ethnonyms that would be recognisable today are few and far between. But part of what we are witnessing in these reports are the initial forays by the newly established Viet

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is translated into Vietnamese with absolutely none of the original Tai language included. This renders the text useless for linguistic, etymological, philological, and literary purposes, and eliminates any potential value as a primary historical source” (1992: 21). I do not agree with this latter argument because comparison of the Vietnamese texts with other texts allows one to note interesting similarities and differences that may bear on historical events. Also, the Vietnamese text does include the alternate versions in footnotes for purposes of comparison.



state into areas it was attempting to lay claim to, and predictably, it met with resistance. In the introduction to *Le Đại Việt et ses Voisins*, Nguyen The Anh (1990: iii) notes that from the 11th century onwards, the frontiers were considered to be ordained by heaven and their maintenance thus bolstered authority: “The task of sovereigns was therefore to assure their defense as way of legitimizing his authority. This resulted in a vision of obsessive fear of the attraction that could be exercised by other centers of power on the populations in peripheral regions: from this came the need to attack rival powers in order to conserve control of one’s own sphere of influence.”

The reports we find in the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* are usually cryptic. Thus, one of the earliest reports from the first decade of the 11th century is of Vietnamese attempts to repress rebels, called ‘Cu-long’, in the old Han-created district of Ai in today’s Thanh-hoa province. The editors identify this as a Muong area, but it was probably also Tai. The royal army, it reports, “crushed them completely, after having put them through fire and blood and captured their chiefs” (Nguyen 1990: 20). In 1013, there was a revolt in the north-west, today’s province of Tai Nguyen, by people, probably Tai, who still supported links with the Nan Chao. They were repressed and their leader “sought refuge with his partisans in the mountain massifs” (Nguyen 1990: 20). In 1014, some 200,000 *Man*<sup>3</sup> crossed what the Vietnamese regarded as their frontier on the Chinese border between Lai Chao and Cao Bang, possibly a foray by Nung. “The invaders were killed in thousands and from whom an innumerable quantity of men and horses were captured” (Nguyen 1990: 21). In the interest of maintaining good relations with the Song Dynasty, a hundred of the captured horses were offered to them.

The minorities on the border between the Vietnamese and Chinese were, unsurprisingly, under pressure from both sides. The new Vietnamese state demonstrated that it had already learned some lessons from the Tang *jimi* policy as it is reported that the new Ly dynasty in 1029 offered a princess in marriage to the indigenous chief of Lang-son, who was probably of a Tai group later known as Tho. Several years later, in 1036, another princess was also given by the emperor to the indigenous chief of an old district, Phong, also substantially Tai, but it could equally have been someone from the Muong group. Later that same year, there is a report of ‘rebels’ in the area between Son-la and Lai-chao, which we can be certain were Tai, “who stole animals and burned down houses” (1990: 23). An army was sent to ‘pacify’ them.

From 1039 on, the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* is pre-occupied with the Nung Zhi-gao rebellion that we have already discussed above, a rebellion that epitomised the ambiguous position of the Tai sandwiched between the powerful Song imperial state and the emerging Vietnamese state. Nestled in amongst this discussion is the first reference to a campaign against the ‘Ai-lao’. This category, that has caused considerable confusion in debates over the origin of the Tai (see Evans 2014), was lifted from the *Han Shu* by the Vietnamese and used as a general designation for many groups they found on their western and north-western borders. Needless to say, the ‘Ai-lao’ were ‘pacified’, “and a considerable number of prisoners and animals were taken” (Nguyen 1990: 27). In spring 1069, the “countries of Nguu-hồng and of Ai-lao offered gold,

<sup>3</sup> Here the Chinese term for ‘barbarian’ is used.

silver, sandalwood, rhinoceros horns, and ivory tusks as well as local products to the emperor” (Nguyen 1990: 29), a first indication of the establishment of tributary relations with these groups. They are not seen in the annals again for one hundred years when, in 1154, they are both in revolt, but were crushed by Vietnamese forces who brought back prisoners, gold, elephants, and so on.

The Nguu-hồng that appear in the Viet annals probably should be called Ngu Hau, the Tai term for the cobra snake. Indeed, the version of the *Khwaam To Muang* by Roux and Chu (1935: 1046) refers to ‘Pu-Chao-Ngu-Hao’, the cobra prince. The Vietnamese version concurs (Đặng Nghiêm Vạn et al., 1977: unknown), but oversteps the evidence when it suggests that cobra was the ancient name for the Black Tai. As we have seen elsewhere, there seems to be some confusion between the name of a group and an individual because the ‘cobra prince’, whose Tai name was Lo Let, lived two centuries later in the 14th century. This is the first mention of the Nguu-hồng (Ngu Hao), and so one could perhaps best render his name as prince of the cobras (cobra people) who lived high up the Black River.<sup>4</sup> Their Ai-lao allies could have been any other Tai group because, at least in the 11th century, there were still no Lao kingdoms to the west. This had changed, however, by the time that Lo Let, or Pu-Chao-Ngu-Hao, became the chief of Muang Muôi and found himself collecting taxes for “a country called Sông-Mat-Tat-Te, but this displeased the King of the Country [Vietnam] which sent an expedition against him and dismissed him from command of the Muang. This decision caused Pu-Chao-Ngu-Hao to lose face and brought fear and shame. He went to demand protection from Fa-Fung-Kam at Chieng-Lung Chieng-Tong [Luang Phrabang]. Fa-Fung-Kam then gave Pu-Chao-Ngu-Hao the country of Chieng-Ten” (Roux and Chu 1935: 1047). The Vietnamese version is more specific:

The noble Ngu Hau stayed with Pha Chao Phong Cam [Souvanna Khamphong] in Laos for six years. Homesick for his country, he asked the Pha Chao to intervene with the Kinh [Vietnamese] to allow him to become once again the lord of Muang Muoi. The king agreed. After returning to his country he engaged in re-organising his villages and districts with counsellors, *xen*, *pong*, *mo* and *nghe*. (Đặng Nghiêm Vạn et al., 1977: unknown)

This occurred under the early Lê Dynasty (1424-1788).<sup>5</sup> The Vietnamese edition of the *Khwaam To Muang* notes that this region was already strongly attached to the Court under the Tran (1225-1400), and adds: “Under the Lê this attachment was much more precise. The lords of Tai territories came to be installed by the Court, paid tribute, rendered other services and provided troops in times of war. For their part the Court provided them with military protection in case of aggression from outside” (Đặng Nghiêm Vạn et al., 1977: unknown). The main point of all this is that by this time, not only have the Vietnamese established tributary relations in the highlands among the

<sup>4</sup> Lo Let, according to the *Khwaam To Muang*, “invented writing and taught it to the people” (Đặng Nghiêm Vạn et al., 1977: unknown), but as we have seen this does not accord with any other evidence. It is possible that he introduced Lao writing, out of which Tai writing developed.

<sup>5</sup> There was a brief six-year interruption of the Mạc Dynasty ‘usurpers’ (1527-1533).

Tai, but the new Lao kingdom in Luang Phrabang had also become an active player in upland Tai politics.

Revolts and skirmishes continued over the centuries, not least due to the instability of the both the lowland and highland political systems. It also becomes clear that the term ‘Ai-lao’ in the annals sometimes refers to Tai groups in the mountains, and sometimes to the kingdoms in Laos. It is interesting, therefore, that the Phuan kingdom is not mentioned until the 15th century in the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*, known there as Muang Bôn. So, in 1434 “Muang Bôn of Ai-lao sent a delegation to offer local produce. In exchange the emperor offered two gold embroidered robes and rolls of silk” (1990: 68). This emergence of Muang Phuan out of the mists of ‘Ai-lao’ would appear to register its establishment as a substantial political entity above that of a chiefdom, although the chronicles narrate a much more ancient pedigree.

Not surprisingly the establishment of ‘Muang Xieng Khwang’ is part of the foundational Khun Bulom legend whereby the children of this god-king, *Thene*, are the founders of the various kingdoms in the region: Luang Phrabang, Xieng Khwang, Vietnam, Chiang Mai, Siam, the Mon and China. The first child, Khun Lo, established his kingdom in Luang Phrabang, the second child, Chet Chuang, in Xieng Khwang and, according to the Xieng Khwang annals, this occurred in the 6th century. This legend, however, was first written down during the reign of King Visun (r.1501-1520) of Luang Phrabang, and was modified and spun into many versions. As Archaimbault has pointed out above, annals like this are not historical texts, and Michel Lorrillard has shown, even for historical figures like King Fa Ngum (r.1352-1373), the founder of the Lan Xang Kingdom, much is unverifiable. Lorrillard (2006: 391) points out that none of the information in the Lao documents of the 14th century and the first seventy-five years of the 15th century can be cross-checked by other sources, except for the existence of Fa Ngum, who is recorded on a Sukhothai stele as a lord from across the Mekong, and his son, Sam Saen Thai, who may be mentioned in Chinese sources. There are, however, no other corroborating sources from Cambodia, Ayutthaya, Vietnam or Lan Na.

Before the ascendance of Fa Ngum, Luang Phrabang, or Muang Swa as it was known, was probably little more than a chiefdom. His establishment of the Lan Xang kingdom and his military aggrandisement were impressive. But it was really only with him that Luang Phrabang began its transformation into a Buddhist kingdom. Its cultural roots still seemed to lay closer to the upland Tai than to the other recently formed Buddhist kingdoms of Lan Na and Sukhothai. This is most apparent in the centrality of ritual sacrifices made to the territorial spirits of *muang* Lan Xang, the *phi muang*, in which the *phi* and *chao* of subordinate *muang* would gather in the capital for grand sacrifices. This was even more so for the chiefdom that had been established on the upland plains in Xieng Khwang. The latter began its transformation into a small Buddhist kingdom with the establishment of Lan Xang, and the kings of Luang Phrabang were the ‘kingmakers’ there. Chao Lan Kham Khong, who was enthroned in 1372, according to the annals:

implanted the Buddhism of Hongsawadi [Burma] which was considered the most pure and he imported a precious bronze representation of the Buddha seated in Indian style as an object of veneration. He sent people to study Buddhism in



Cambodia to reinforce the religion's foundations. Large temples and stupas were constructed in several points in the territory. Since then, Buddhism has flourished. Achan Thammakhatha, expert in magical treatises, came from Luang Phrabang to help Chao Lan Kham Khong to build temples and stupas, to establish statues of the Buddha and to work for the country. He erected twelve altars for the protective spirits and established the annual buffalo sacrifice, a custom that continues up to our days (Archaimbault 1967: 570).

Asked by her son, Chao Kham Khong, whether Luang Phrabang was 'civilised', his mother replied: "This muang is very civilised and its inhabitants cultivate merit. Our territory of Muang P'uon is ignorant of the sacred texts, the law; it is not at all civilised" (Archaimbault 1967: 607).

The Phuan state could only have been small. Estimates of its population in the early 19th century put it roughly at 40,000<sup>6</sup> (before the depredations later in the century), but despite the latter it was probably roughly the same or smaller 400 years earlier. It was an important force with which to be reckoned in the mountains, but not regionally, where it fluctuated as a vassal of either Luang Phrabang or Vietnam. Indeed, in 1448, the Vietnamese declared it to be Quy-hôp district of Nghệ-an province. Such declarations, however, reflected Vietnam's own imperial fantasies. Regalia and symbols of rule, for example, were distributed to the 'chiefs' of Muang Phuan:

The indigenous chief of Quy-hôp district, Kham Khong, was given the title of grand general organizer of the far regions. His main assistant secretary Trính Dao was to wear a red coat embroidered with flowers of gold as insignia, and a large hat, and a belt decorated with silver, a saddle and a writing desk (1990: 77).

Yet the realities of power and influence fluctuated. In the late 15th century, the Vietnamese, partly in revenge for Lan Xang's support of the Ming invasion of Vietnam earlier in the century, launched a massive campaign across northern mainland Southeast Asia. Sun Laichen (2006: 102), who has documented Vietnam's acquisition and use of firearms at this time, writes:

In the fall of 1479 Đại Việt, with a force of 180,000 according to Vietnamese sources, launched more fierce invasions into Ai-lao, Muang Phuan, Lan Sang, and further west. Of these Lan Sang was subdued easily.

They threatened the other Tai kingdoms, and reportedly reached as far as the Irrawaddy River in the Ava kingdom. It was a five-year campaign that made it clear to all concerned that Vietnam was a major force with which to be reckoned. Sun Laichen

<sup>6</sup> The estimate is taken from Smuckarn and Breazeale (1988: 3). Later in the century a census put the population of the Phuan state at 24,920, following war and deportations by the Siamese. But, as they point out, some thirty per cent of these were Hmong, and these people were not in Xieng Khwang when the Phuan kingdom was first established, although the 14.3 per cent of 'other hilltribes' may have been much larger back then.

is mainly interested in the impact of guns on warfare, but one should also note that this campaign would have had a great impact on the upland Tai, many of whom would have been swept into the Vietnamese army as either soldiers or porters and carried across the region. I have previously made the point with regard to the Nan Chao invasions of northern Vietnam that many Tai would have been drawn into the Nan Chao armies and, besides learning warfare from them, would have begun their exploration of greener pastures further west. No doubt this Vietnamese campaign (like the Nan Chao war) was instrumental in compelling many Tai (such as those later called Phu Tai) to move further south along and over the cordillera to cross the banks of the Mekong into north-eastern Thailand.

The foundation of a 'Lao' kingdom in the Luang Phrabang area is, as Martin Stuart-Fox writes, "shrouded in mystery and myth.... Nor do we know when the first *mandala* was established in the region of Luang Phrabang" (1997: 7). Tatsuo Hoshino says that the 'most ancient date for a Lao monarch according to all the chronicles is 1271-2' (1986: 92), but these chronicles, as we have noted already, are problematic. Fa Ngum is the first Lao king whose reign can be established with some certainty, but even so the whole story that surrounds him in the chronicles conforms, as Hoshino (1986: 97) remarks, to a legendary pattern:

One comes to see in these Tai traditions several points in common: the transgression or violation of sexual rules committed by a member of the royal family; his expulsion from the country by means of a river, a mother who speaks against the chastisement; being accompanied by a close relative and retainers; the protection or favour given to the exiled and future founder [of a kingdom] by the king of big power who gives him his daughter in marriage as well as title to the kingdom.

That the Lao dispossessed a prior Austroasiatic chiefdom (some may say kingdom) has been recognised in the royal rituals of Luang Phrabang for hundreds of years. Just how they were displaced is less clear. That such groups were often displaced by clear military aggression is well attested, but this is not discussed in the Luang Phrabang annals. Perhaps it was a process whereby Tai groups gradually settled within the confines of Muang Swa, began to participate in its society and its politics until such time as they carried out a coup d'état. Or, was Fa Ngum's march on Muang Swa with his upland Tai reinforcements<sup>7</sup> the final military coup de grâce delivered to the Austroasiatic rulers who were then expelled to the margins of the kingdom? It is a scenario that is as plausible as any other.

*Who were the 'Lao' anyway?*

Laos' pre-eminent historian, Maha Sila Viravong, in his *Phongsavadan Lao*, explores various speculations, such as that by the Thai nationalist, Luang Wichit Wathakan, who claimed that Lao came from the tribal name 'Lawa', a people in the far north of Thailand and Myanmar who mixed with the Tai on their alleged trek south from Nan Chao, and called the latter 'Lao'. Or, 'Lao' was somehow a transformation of 'Dao',

<sup>7</sup> The story of Fa Ngum's Xieng Khouang diversion conforms to Hoshino's model.

star, which could be ‘heaven’ (Maha Sila, 1957: 6-9). Sila finally decides, somewhat predictably (and without giving any argumentation), that Lao derives from Luang, and means Great and Civilised. And, he settles for the Reverend Dodd’s assertions in the *Tai Race: the Elder Brother of the Chinese* (1923) that the Lao are one of the oldest ‘races’ in the world, equal to, if not older than, the Chinese. The argument is embarrassingly amateurish, but strangely it is as good as it gets among Lao historians.

In fact, the origin of the term ‘Lao’ is Chinese.

The ‘Lao’ 獠 (sometimes written as Leao or Liao in European languages<sup>8</sup>) were so-called since the first Chinese push into Sichuan by the Qin. It is a term that in Sichuan covered a wide range of uplanders, who were an endless source of trouble for the Chinese. The latter typically attributed to them all kinds of uncivilised practices, such as having no surnames, eating their enemies, and so on. They were spread across the highland areas of Sichuan and into northern Guizhou. Ma (1883: 120) in the 13th century, after a long discussion of the Sichuan Lao, reports: “Today one hears about more than a *hundred varieties* [my emphasis] of Leao [Lao] in the south-west regions of *Yeou-kiang*”, that is, the Right River in Guangxi. In fact, the term Lao had been brought south by the Han armies, who also used it to describe the troublesome uplanders that they encountered there. Edward Schafer (1967: 48-9) observes:

As the Lao and their cousins were overwhelmed in the Han-Tang interval, their name was gradually extended by the Chinese to all southern savages as a term of contempt, and by Tang times the most diverse cultures of Nam-Viet, some quite unlike the original Lao, were styled “Lao” as they had already been loosely called “Man.” In Sung times the term “Lao of the sea” was applied even to the Arabs.

Michael Churchman (2011: 70) concurs with ‘Chinese scholarship’ that “the terms Yi and Man mean ‘barbarian’, but that Li, Lao and Wuhu refer to ethnic groupings”, with the Lao being figured as Tai. No argument is provided, but even a cursory look at the texts would suggest that ‘Lao’ refers to some of the most ‘savage’ groups. We cannot go into the problem in detail here, but there is an issue over ethnic identification in pre-modern Chinese annals where ethnic designations are inconsistent – broad in one instance, narrow in another. Even later Chinese chroniclers, such as Che Fan (1908: 333) in his *Tien Hi* of 1807 in the chapter *Chou Yi*, or on the submission of the barbarians of Yunnan, complains:

Yet the barbarian races are very numerous and difficult to categorise. Moreover, previously and still today, they are continuously transformed and split up; what has

<sup>8</sup> Inez de Beauclair (1970: 149) clarifies the reading of this character: “As the name of tribes it has to be read as lao, otherwise liao, meaning to hunt by night.” Ma (1883: 106) warns the reader not to mistake them with the similarly called Leao, known also as Ki-tan, a formidable people on the empire’s northern border. As for 獠, one must note the radical indicating their sub-human status. As Schafer (1967: 57) writes: “The Man and the Lao and all the rest of them were animalian, and the graphs that represented their names almost invariably showed the recognizable symbol of a wild beast or a reptile.”

been written about them is really erroneous, and to repeat (the words of the ancient authors) would have the result of multiplying the confusions.

After poring over the Chinese sources to try to understand the ethnicities along the Chinese-Vietnamese border, G. Deviera (1886: 87) wrote:

Although the names given by the Chinese are far from having an ethnic signification, they will vary by locality and even when designating individuals of the same race, we have decided that in the absence of better information these descriptions of these people from Chinese sources can offer some interest.

The fact that Guangxi had many Tai meant that some would be encompassed by the general term Lao, but many so-called ‘Lao’ were in fact not Tai. Inez de Beauclair (1970: 148-89) has probably provided the most exhaustive account of the use of ‘Lao’ as an ethnic marker in her discussion of the history of the Keh Lao of Guizhou.<sup>9</sup> But she stays so close to her Chinese sources that, in the end, she cannot distinguish the wood from the trees; there are ‘Lao’ everywhere, and she actually proves Schafer’s point about the indiscriminate use of the category by the Chinese.

Nevertheless, it seems clear that a group of Tai speakers adopted ‘Lao’ as their ethnonym, and it was they who set off down the rivers of northern Vietnam and Laos, in particular the Nam Ou.<sup>10</sup> Basing his comments on an ethnolinguistic map compiled by the EFEO in 1949, Jim Chamberlain (1991: 467) concludes that:

If density of population is any indication, the main route of Lao migration was along the Nam Ou, through Muang Khoa, Muang Ngoy to Pak Ou, into Luang Phrabang, and southward along the Mekhong to Xagnaboury, Pak Lai and Khene Thao.

The use of this ethnonym would have expanded following the Lao domination of Luang Phrabang and the rise of Lan Xang, and the need of the kingdom and its people to say who they were. The Lao are first registered in the famous 13th century Ram Khamhaeng inscription of Sukhothai, where they hardly stand out from the other Tai in the region: “All the Ma, the Kao, the Lao, the Tai of the lands under the vault of heaven and the Tai who live along the Ou and the Khong come to do obeisance to King Sri

<sup>9</sup> De Beauclair’s essay was written in 1946, and has a small linguistic appendix in which she seems inclined to associate the Keh Lao with Austroasiatic or Tibeto-Burman speakers. Modern linguists say the Keh Lao are Kadai speakers (see Edmondson and Solnit 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Guignard (1911: 233) recognised this association of ‘Lao’ with ‘barbarian’ and wrote: “It is therefore probable that the name was given by their Chinese neighbours. Previously Chinese authors tended to call the Thay thus, and in our days the Chinese of the two Kouang still give this name Lao to mountain tribes, principally those who are Thay, who inhabit the south of their two Chinese provinces, and also to the people who inhabit the mountains of Keoui-Tcheou [Guichou].” Michel Ferlus (2006b: 3) provides a linguistic reconstruction of the term Lao and recognises its origins in Chinese, but says nothing about how the ethnonym was used.

Inraditya's son King Rama Khamhaeng."<sup>11</sup> Lefèvre-Pontalis (1897: 65) suggests that '*Muong Lao*' arose "in opposition to those of *Muong-Lu* and *Muong-Youne* [Lanna]." Indeed, as Lorrillard (2006: 401) has pointed out, it is only in the 15th century that the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* mentions the Lao again, "providing them with recognition on the regional scene." Of course, many other Tai who were migrating into the south-west did not call themselves Lao at all, although much later if they were finally caught in the web of one Lao state or another, they would begin to adopt this ethnonym. Most people identified with either their village or their *muang*, i.e., in answer to the question 'who are you?' the response was (until recently in Laos) 'I am *Tai Ban Khao*' (I am a White Village person), or 'I am *Tai Muang Khao*' (I am from White Muang).<sup>12</sup>

As for the Chinese, when the Lao state of Lan Xang appeared on the horizons of the Ming Dynasty it was called either Lao Zhua 老撾 or Lao Wo (as it still is today by Mandarin speakers). Lao Zhua was perhaps an attempt to render 'Swa', as the former kingdom in Luang Prabang was known, but Lao Wo soon became more common.<sup>13</sup> What is intriguing, however, is that the Chinese name is clearly also an attempt to find a homophone for the name 'Lao'. Of course, they already had 獠, but the latter referred to barbarian groups inside China, and this would appear to have also ruled out simply dropping the radical to write Lao as 寮. So they used 老, whose primary meaning is old. And, it has stayed that way – although the modern Chinese spelling of Lao Wo is 老撾. There is, of course, an irony in all of this in that the Tai/Lao, who migrated down to Luang Phrabang, took the ethnonym with them, but not the Chinese spelling of it, thus disguising the ethnonym's origins. Consequently, when the Ming encountered 'the Lao' of Lao Zhua, they assumed that they were doing so for the first time.

Similarly, there has been rather simplistic speculation about the ethnic terms Tai Khao, White Tai, and Tai Dam, Black Tai, mostly associated with the alleged colour of the people's clothing – which certainly must be baffling for the modern traveller, who is confronted by an array of colours. Once again, it seems that these terms may have a Chinese origin. In Fan Cho's *Man Shu* (1961: 33), written in the 9th century about the Nan Chao Kingdom, he describes the dominant groups there as, "The Western Ts'uan [Tuan] are the Pai Man (White Man). The Eastern Ts'uan [Tuan] are the Wu Man (Black Man)." The Lolo of Yunnan were also divided into black and white.<sup>14</sup> The White Tai

<sup>11</sup> This is a slight adaptation of the translation by Griswold and Prasert (1971: 216). For the original in Thai, see Chamberlain (1991: xxv).

<sup>12</sup> Guignard (1911: 243) commented that the Laotians, even more than the Siamese, "subdivide their *tribus* to infinity giving them the name of the regions that they inhabit."

<sup>13</sup> Both *Zhua* and *Wo* have the same meaning 'to beat, to strike', which further suggests that *Zhua* was an attempt to find a homophone for 'Swa'. *Zhua* probably declined as the Chinese realised that *muang* Swa no longer existed. A dictionary produced in Hong Kong still uses the non-PRC spelling for the country, but it also suggests that it is equally acceptable to refer to Lao people using either 老 or 寮 (Lu, 1992: 995).

<sup>14</sup> Michel Ferlus (2009: 2) in an examination of the etymology of the term 'Bai Yue' writes: "Currently, several ethnic groups in South East Asia and south China are designated by expressions interpreted as 'white,' White Yi, White Thai, etc. One may wonder if the source is not simply the ethnonym \**b.rak* which over the centuries may have been reinterpreted by the *bái* phonogram 白. Subsequently, the ethnic compounds containing the word "black" were introduced to satisfy a



were known as Bai-bó-yi (白獒夷), the white barbarians, and the Black Tai as Hei-bó-yi (黑獒夷), the black barbarians. The character *bó* (獒) apparently refers to an ‘ancient’ tribal group. One implication was that the ‘white’ group was more ‘civilised’ (Sinicised) than the black group. In Indochina, the terms Black Tai and White Tai seem to have only become common during French colonial rule. Previously, and to the extent that the Vietnamese required a general term for the Tai, they called them Tho (土), more or less signifying ‘aboriginal’. In modern Vietnam, Tho has been discarded and Thay is used instead.

### Everyday migration

Rural communities based on irrigated, wet rice agriculture, are generally stable communities. Farmers are understandably reluctant to abandon diked paddy fields, *thong na*, into which they have put considerable labour. But upland Tai in the valleys of the hills and mountains of Laos, even today, commonly combine paddy rice agriculture with upland dry rice cultivation. These dry fields, *hai*, are also important for other crops, such as cotton or maize. This combination of *na* and *hai* has always been important to Tai communities, and each community, and indeed each family in those communities, had varying combinations of *na* and *hai*. The carrying capacity of each valley, naturally, varied and so, population growth would eventually require some people to move, most often those dependent on only *hai*. Just how far people moved depended on local conditions, but throughout the region one will find the term *mai* (new) appended to one village or another; so the original village will be called *ban khao*, white village, and its offshoot *ban khaomai*, new white village. Such villages are normally close to each other. But in some cases villagers moved long distances, maybe due to a village dispute, and they established new villages with new names. Running through the valleys where the upland Tai lived were rivers, and the Tai gained a reputation for their boating skills, something that clearly facilitated moving long distances when necessary.

Establishing a new village was hard, backbreaking work. Trees needed to be felled and cleared, and houses built, initially somewhat flimsy bamboo constructions, which with the felled logs were later turned into sturdy houses. Migrants can only bring so much rice and other foods with them, so from the beginning hunting and fishing, and gathering by women in the forests, provided crucial supplements to the migrants’ everyday diet. They were, for a while, peasant-hunter-gatherers.

David Holm gives a Buyi account of internal migration from Guangxi to Guizhou, related in a ritual text, ‘Opening of the Domain’, where it is clear that a reason for moving is pressure on available paddy land: “One only got wetfield for the older sibling, One didn’t get wetfield for the younger sibling.” They cut down trees to make boats, and made bamboo rafts that they punted upstream into domains already held by other ‘lineages’. Yet, they overcame various obstacles and established themselves in a new area. Holm remarks, “Overall, it is evident that the dominant direction of migration is upstream from south to north. This accords with other traditions and generally accepted

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cultural need for balance and harmony.”

theories about the prehistoric migrations of speakers of Northern Tai into the Guizhou highlands from points of origin south and east” (Holm 2009: 28). Talk of prehistoric migrations in this context seem to me to be a misunderstanding of what a tale like this is telling – which relates to population pressure in living memory, and of course one should not overlook the population pressure exerted by incoming Chinese migrants which caused Tai to move further into the rugged hinterlands of both Guangxi and Guizhou. Indeed, the Chinese populated the south-east of Guangxi and then moved inland, often pushing out the Tai and others before them. But he remarks, correctly, that “these accounts operated within village society as cultural reflections of mobility, and served as reminders that migration was an option to be considered again if circumstances required” (Holm 2009: 35).

At the time of the initial exodus, the *jimi* system was still not entrenched in the region, and Tai chieftains who benefited from that system still had little control over the movement of their people. Influential local village leaders probably played the most important role in decisions to move. One other resource that these upland regions had was alluvial gold that they traded with the lowlands. Leaving behind these resources would have been hard, but panning for alluvial gold is relatively easy, and uplanders can still be seen doing it throughout the Indochina mountain regions.

Many studies of Tai groups have written about their migrations and their establishment of new villages, although there is little information from the early historical period. But again, what we know of Tai peasants in the 19th and 20th centuries leads us to believe that the dynamics of movement and the difficulties of establishing new villages were not all that different a thousand years ago. The accounts we have of village formation and migration are from Tai groups who already fell within the orbit of a Tai state, unlike those in the initial Tai diaspora who were fleeing the Chinese state into areas beyond the reach of a state, or only weakly within its influence. Significantly, early Tai states like Ayutthaya, issued edicts to try to entice peasants to leave the forests and settle within their jurisdiction as paddy farmers, and indeed it has often been said that the main problem for Southeast Asian states was manpower. Lorraine Gesick remarks in her thesis on Siamese kingship, “Thus in studying the Ayudhiyan and Bangkok kingdoms one frequently comes across decrees exhorting the *chaomuang* to *kliaklom* (persuade, entice) the people hiding in the forests to come and settle in the *muang* and *tham pa pen na* (make the forest into ricefields) and make the *muang* prosperous’ (Gesick, 1976: 16). While land was still abundant and while there were forests to flee to, Tai peasants were notoriously footloose when confronted with excessive state demands.

In his excellent account of the peopling of the Chi River basin in North-east Thailand by the Lao from the 18th century onwards, Charles Keyes underlines the interaction between the state and peasants in the process. It was partly the establishment of new *muang* by the state that attracted peasants, but expansion was also a spontaneous process as a result of demographic pressures.

The quest for land took such people only as far away from their home village as was necessary for them to find uncultivated land. It was rare for only one couple from a village to move out of their home village and settle on a homestead. More

usually, several families would move together and found the nucleus of a new village (Keyes, 1976: 54).

Lucien Hanks, in his classic *Rice and Man* (1972), writing about a newly opened up area north of Bangkok as ‘The Years of Shifting Cultivation: 1850-90,’ shows the hardship undergone by farmers to open up new paddy lands, and this was an area where at least some trade with urban Bangkok was possible:

The land promised nothing but struggle... the uniform dreariness of the wilderness [was] depressing. The variations are of season only, not of person, scene or event... Instead, there is isolation, with few occasions for gaiety, and the foreboding blackness of night outside the bamboo shack. Just to feed a household requires many hours of toil (Hanks, 1972: 76).

The re-peopling of the Thai North-east with Lao following the population decline in the region from the 13th to the 17th century following the decline of Angkor, was not only a result of spontaneous movements of peasants, but also the forced relocation of peoples from the left bank of the Mekong into the north-east in the decades following the failure of the King of Vientiane, Chao Anu, in his war with Bangkok in 1827-28. For example, in the 1870s a British consular official reported on the plight of people brought down from the Phuan areas on and around the Plain of Jars:

the unfortunate creatures – men, women and children, many of the latter still in arms – were driven off in droves through the jungles from [the Phuan state] to Pichai the nearest point on the [Chao Phraya] river. This terrible march occupied more than a month... The captives were hurried along mercilessly, many weighed with burdens strapped on their backs... they were placed on rafts and brought down the river to the place where I saw them (quoted in Smuckarn and Breazeale, 1988: 54).

Smaller relocations of peoples by Tai states occurred across the region. In the area in northern Thailand where Michael Moerman (1968: 13) did his fieldwork, he reported that Tai Lue villagers had been forcefully deported there in the 19th century from the Sip Song Panna to open up lands under the aegis of the Siamese state, and hence strengthen the latter’s claims to border regions. A well-known Lue village on the outskirts of Luang Phrabang was also settled with people deported from the Sip Song Panna around the same time.

In his study of Thai-Lao Buddhism, Hayashi Yukio (2003: 61) noted that “most of the non-Lao living in northeast Thailand view the Lao as a sort of nomadic people who are able to generate some form of economic gain from ‘comparatively’ excessive moving.” Austroasiatic peoples were scattered across Laos and north-eastern Thailand before the arrival of the Tai/Lao, and are recognised in modern times as Suai (Kui), Kaloeng, Nyo, Yoi and Khmer. A member of another small group, the Nyakhur, saw the Lao and Thai in the following way: they “are comparable to *mot ngam* [a type of ant:



*phaidologetonwersus*] which seek out and surround banana and sugarcane. They swarm around anything sweet, devouring it completely. We [Chao Bon, i.e., uplanders] did not eat anything but they ate everything without leaving a single scrap” (Hayashi, 2003: 53).

The territories the Tai launched themselves into were sparsely populated with Austroasiatic populations or Tibeto-Burman ones, and indeed many of them already occupied some of the most fertile valleys. Given the hard work of establishing new villages and fields, one can see the attractions of aggressively dispossessing them when possible.

There were, of course, trading routes criss-crossing the mountains and rivers, and the Tai established themselves at river junctions, and where trails connected with rivers. But for most Tai, trade was not their dominant activity. Perhaps there were already networks of occasional markets for produce, and if not they probably established them. That is where women (normally) will congregate early in the morning on the fringes of a particular village to sell their wares every week or two weeks, and disperse before the sun becomes too hot. More regular markets were only to be found in towns connected to, for example, the lowland state in northern Vietnam.

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# Kra-Dai and the Proto-History of South China and Vietnam<sup>1</sup>

James R. Chamberlain

## Abstract

The onset of the Zhou dynasty at the end of the second millennium BCE coincides roughly with the establishment of the Chǔ (tshra? / khra C) fiefdom and the emergence of the ethnolinguistic stock known as Kra-Dai (Tai-Kadai). The ancestors of the Kra family proper, situated in the southwestern portion of Chǔ, began to disperse ostensibly as a result of upheavals surrounding the end of Shang, the beginning of Western Zhou, and the gradual rise of Chǔ into a full-fledged kingdom by the 8th century BCE. Beginning with this underlying premise and the stance of comparative and historical linguistics, the present paper provides, in a chronological frame, a hopefully more probable picture of the ethnolinguistic realities of China south of the Yangtze and relevant parts of Southeast Asia, including the geography past and present, of language stocks and families, their classification, time-depth, and the possible relationships between them. The focus is primarily on the Kra-Dai stock of language families up until the end of the Han Dynasty in the 2nd century CE, and secondarily up to the 11th century. Attention is given to what can be deduced or abduced with respect to ethnic identities in pre-Yue Lingnan and Annam, and to other questions such as whether or not Kam-Sui should be included under the rubric of Yue and the position of Mường in early Vietnam.

## Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Grant Evans whose final publications, both in *JSS* 102 and posthumously in the present volume, have refocused attention on the broader history of the Tais in Southeast Asia and paved the way for a re-examination of old ideas in the light of new evidence. The resurgence can be said to have begun with Chris Baker's paper in Volume 90 of *JSS* which used linguistic evidence to trace historical movements of Tais from an assumed Urheimat along the Guangxi-Vietnamese border west into Laos, Yunnan, Thailand, Burma and Assam. Following on from the

<sup>1</sup> I owe a great debt of gratitude to David Holm, who gave generously of his time and knowledge in the preparation of this paper. Without his advice and deep insights into southern Chinese and Zhuang history and prehistory the story told here would have been much the poorer. I would also like to thank Gérard Diffloth, Nathan Badenoch, and Weera Ostapirat, with whom I was fortunate enough to discuss various aspects of linguistic proto-history and their bearing on topics addressed here and to learn from their extensive and profound scholarship.

works of these authors, the present paper attempts to extend the story backwards by using linguistic, historical, prehistorical, proto-historical, and cultural evidence from other families belonging to the Kra-Dai or Tai-Kadai stock, in order to establish a framework into which scenarios such as those proposed by Baker and Evans may fit.

## Introduction

This paper aims to provide a more accurate picture of the linguistic realities of China south of the Yangtze and relevant parts of Southeast Asia, the geography, past and present of language stocks and families, their classification, time-depth, and the possible relationships between them. The focus will be primarily on the Kra-Dai language families, especially the eastern segment, up until the end of the Han Dynasty in the 2nd century CE, and secondarily on the subsequent history until the 12th century CE. I will especially call attention to what can be deduced with respect to pre-Yue Lingnan and Annam, and whether or not Kam-Sui should be included under the rubric of Yue.

The paper also supplements and hopefully clarifies some of the conclusions that I had drawn earlier (especially 1991a, c, d and 1998) in the light of more recent information that has become available from a variety of sources.

Kra-Dai is the name proposed by Weera Ostapirat (2000) composed of two native etyma, Kra and Tai (Dai), the names of representative families within the stock. It replaces Paul Benedict's Tai-Kadai, the second part of which is a coining that combines ethnonymic elements not actually employed by any particular group. It encompasses the related ethnolinguistic families of Kra (Gelao, Laha, Lachi, Paha, Buyang, Pubiao), Hlai (aka Li, Lei, Day), and Kam-Tai (Kam-Sui and Be-Tai).

Stumbling through the dense volumes that have been written on the early history and proto-history of China and Vietnam, the comparative linguist is soon overwhelmed by acute pangs of vexation as disembodied emperors, kings, and local ethnarchs battle their way through time and place shrouded in ethnolinguistic nebulosity. For most writers, where language and ethnicity is concerned, this territory is imagined as a chaotic jumble of diverse peoples so thoroughly undistinguished by Chinese historians as to be impossible to view in a systematic way.

A magnificent exception is the work of Edward Schafer (1967), consummate multi-disciplinarian whose pages teem with linguistic, ethnographic, literary and biological tapestries limited only by availability of sources and his focus on the Tang (or Song in the case of Hainan). Of particular interest is his insistence on providing the reconstructed Middle Chinese phonemicizations for Chinese words so deceptive in their Mandarin Pinyin forms.

Few, however, have followed in his footsteps. We have no equivalent histories of southern China or Vietnam that focus on an earlier time depth, address the subject in a more holistic way, and take advantage of recent advances in the reconstruction of Old Chinese, complementing the earlier work of Karlgren and Pulleyblank, especially Schuessler (2007) and Baxter and Sagart (2014), not to mention advances in archaeology and philology.

More recently, David Holm (2015), who specializes in the decipherment of Zhuang manuscripts composed using Chinese characters, has allowed non-Sinologists a glimpse



into the rich array of studies by Chinese scholars in the fields of archeology, history, human genetics, historical geography, and linguistics, all aimed at uncovering Kra-Dai identities from the often confusing evidence.

Historians and even anthropologists might be forgiven for not following the rather technical methods of historical linguistics, but unfortunately lack of understanding has not discouraged many from making sweeping and often erroneous statements based on nationalistic fervor, faulty assumptions, hearsay, and linguistic lookalikes. Most misunderstandings stem from a failure to correctly identify cognates, that is, morphemes that are descended from a common root form, as opposed to lookalikes.<sup>2</sup> Correct identification of cognates is accomplished by finding other root forms that underwent the same systematic sound changes.

This paper employs the methods of historical linguistics, beginning with linguists working with the spoken languages of people on the ground, converting their speech into written phonemic transcriptions to use as the basis for comparison and reconstruction. Where written evidence is available, written by native speakers in their own languages, regardless of the transcription system, this is of course a primary source of data as well. These analyses may then be compared to other types of information; historical, biological, and cultural. The worldview represented here is therefore different from that of history which relies, in our area, on early written documents in the Chinese language by Chinese historians, mostly from elite segments of society, representing a decidedly top-down view. It also means that histories are compiled according to the availability of documents, and are dependent upon literacy. Peoples without writing systems have no history. But they do have a past, and they do have language. In this sense, historical linguistics has a much broader range of primary sources.

Language takes precedence. Existing as an unconscious process in the human brain, language is not subject to the vicissitudes of political bias found in history, nor to the relative randomness of cultural borrowing of anthropology and archeology. And one should always be aware of the dangers of associating names of archeological “cultures” with living languages and ethnonyms. In Chinese political theory since 1950, Marxist-Stalinist amalgamation and reification of ethnolinguistic groupings into “nationalities” has overly simplified the picture with respect to languages and cultures (cf. Heather Peters 1990:5 ff). This having been said, I have tried wherever possible to link linguistic with historical or archeological evidence under the assumption that agreement from multiple sources provides a more convincing argument.

Of course the meaning of nationalist terms can always be re-defined to mean people who formerly existed within the boundaries of modern-day states; *Pithecanthropus*

<sup>2</sup> In one recent example from our sphere of concern, the suggestion was made that the *chao* of Nan Chao is an old term originating in this kingdom, borrowed from here into Tai languages, the evidence being that the word occurs only in the Central and Southwest branches, and could not be found in northern Zhuang (Northern Tai Branch), the author having searched a dictionary finding that “*chao* is absent” (Evans 2014). Of course, in fact, the term *is* found in the Northern Branch languages, but with the cognates *θuu* or *suu*, that is, searching only for *chao* doesn’t get one very far. Without understanding the etymological roots of words, such errors may easily occur, leading in this case to an erroneous assumption concerning the evolution of Tai statehood.

*erectus* was Indonesian, Ban Chiang was Thai, or Đông Sơn was Vietnamese. However, with the exception of a few individuals on the ultra-nationalist fringe, the scholarly community does not (or should not) generally accept such statements. Anthropologists, apart from structuralists like Levi-Strauss who was in turn influenced by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, often assume that because of the random ways in which cultural artifacts may be borrowed or disseminated across ethnic boundaries, that language change operates in analogous ways, and is therefore unreliable.

Comparative and historical linguistics depends upon immutable laws of sound change that are systematic, not random. There are no anthropological or meta-historiographic correlates for these laws, a fact that no doubt accounts for the haphazard ways that linguistic evidence is often utilized.

Finally, it should be mentioned that a good deal of historical, archeological, geographic and genetic information is available only in Chinese language and here I must defer to others more capable than myself to explore and extrapolate. The works of David Holm are excellent precedents.

### The ethnolinguistics of southern China and northern Vietnam

In this paper I propose that the Kra-Dai language family appeared at least as early as the 12th century BCE in the middle Yangtze basin. First of all, though, it is necessary to examine the question of the ethnic composition of this area and which groups may have coexisted with or be ultimately related to Kra-Dai.

I see no convincing evidence of an Austroasiatic presence in southern China or the early territory known as Jiaozhi, except for a slight northward spillover of Palaungic, Pakanic, Pramic<sup>3</sup> and Khmu into southern Yunnan and the Guangxi border areas. The Norman and Mei hypothesis, which postulated an Austroasiatic homeland along the middle Yangtze, has been largely abandoned in most circles, and left unsupported by the majority of Austroasiatic specialists.

Based primarily on their present-day situation—I assume that the ancestors of Miao-Yao (Hmong-Mien) were primarily mountain-dwelling swiddeners. According to Lemoine (1982, 2002), the particular form of Taoist religion found among the Mien (Yao) and Mun (Lantène) indicates a presence in the lower Yangtze basin in the 11th or the 12th century CE. The Mun, although residing along streams in lowland valleys, still practice swidden agriculture rather than paddy (or did so until recently), and were often referred to as lowland Yao, whereas Mien and Hmong traditionally resided near the tops of high mountains. Gordon Downer (1978) notes that Tai-Yao contact forms consist mainly of items specific to the Northern branch of Tai, or to Kam-Sui, not words that can be reconstructed in Proto-Tai, and mostly cultural terms as opposed to basic vocabulary. In other words, contact between the Tai and Yao is relatively recent and confined to geographical areas close to the current locales of the languages, and thus not what we

<sup>3</sup> Pramic is the name introduced by Gérard Diffloth at the 6th Austroasiatic Conference held in Siem Reap in 2015 to resolve a linguistic classification problem in Northern Mon-Khmer. It includes Ksing Mul, Bit, Thai Then, Phong languages of Houa Phen, Pray of Xaynaboury, and a number of small languages spoken in the tri-border area of Phongsaly, Wen Shan, and Lai Chau.



would expect had the association been older and further north. Likewise, Ostapirat (2014) suggests that correspondences between Chinese and Miao-Yao (MY) are not regular and reflect mostly Middle Chinese borrowings, though Miao-Yao probably had contact with Proto-Min. Even an Old Chinese word for the mythological ‘dog ancestor’ \*koʔ is not found elsewhere in Sino-Tibetan and may originate with Miao-Yao, deriving from an old Yao myth of the ancestor Emperor Pien Kou—a myth which is also found in ancient China and which gave birth to the *Chia Sen Pong* scroll, a kind of official charter found in many Mien villages allowing them to roam freely across southern China and settle in the mountains wherever they may choose, free from taxation.

Sinitic languages, it is generally agreed, are genetically most closely related to Tibeto-Burman and together form the stock known as Sino-Tibetan. Other hypotheses have been proposed that link Chinese to Miao-Yao, Kra-Dai or even to Austronesian, but so far these have not gained wide acceptance.

I suggest that the most important ethnolinguistic stock in the area was Austronesian. There is growing evidence for a Kra-Dai-Austronesian or Austro-Tai connection in southern China (e.g. Ostapirat 2005). The term Austro-Tai refers to the more narrow association of these two stocks alone, excluding Miao-Yao and Japanese which were included in Benedict’s original “Austro-Thai” hypothesis (Ostapirat 2013:1). Kra-Dai and Austronesian appear to be sister stocks, rather than Kra-Dai being a branch of Malayo-Polynesian as has often been assumed (Ostapirat 2013:9). The probable time depth of Proto Austro-Tai, however, places it beyond the scope of this paper.

Some Austronesians on the mainland coast may have coexisted with Be-Tais, and may even have been subject to Tai feudal lords, but the deeper question of Austro-Tai genetic relationships is something separate. Blust (1985) puts the Austronesian homeland in Taiwan, based on the Austronesian branch diversity found there, at a time depth of approximately 5,500 years. Interestingly, this is somewhat earlier than we are assuming for Proto-Kra-Dai, so the period of Austro-Tai unity would have been even earlier. The most recent comprehensive DNA study focusing on Austronesia (Soares et al. 2016) supports the linguistic evidence for a Taiwanese origin of Proto-Austronesian at a time depth of 4,000 years. The time depth is still problematic as most theories about Austronesian are based upon archeology, whereas there are some historical materials to assist in the analysis of Kra-Dai. Furthermore, in Austro-Tai studies, most of the attention has been on the islands, with comparatively little focus on the mainland.

Soares et al. (2016) find a clear genetic linkage between the populations of Guangxi, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan and the Philippines with those of Yunnan, northern Thailand and portions of northern Burma. Possibly this represents the Kra-Dai-Austronesian connection though this is not stated explicitly (Austro-Tai or Kra-Dai are surprisingly not even mentioned) and samples from northern Vietnam and Laos are not reported.

The present location of Kra-Dai languages in relation to Austronesian does not support the conventional wisdom that their origin lay along the South China coast, but suggests a west-to-east movement of Austro-Tai peoples, probably following the Red, Pearl, and Yangtze river systems. This would allow for a splitting off of Austronesian, and account for the close relationship of the inland westerly Proto-Kra language to pelagic Austronesian.

Just as a brief example, this relationship can be readily observed in the number systems of the reconstructed forms for Proto-Austronesian (PAN), Proto-Kra (PK) and Proto-Hlai (PH) in the set of cognates below.<sup>4</sup>

	<i>PAN (W)</i>	<i>PK</i>	<i>PH (N)</i>	<i>PH (O)</i>
One	*ica	*tɕəm C	*tɕhu:ʔ	*cī C
Two	*dusa	*sa A	*hlu: ʔ	*alau C
Three	*télu	*tu A	*tʃhwuʔ	*utu C
Four	*səpat	*pə A	*tʃha:wʔ	*atəu C
Five	*lima	*r-ma A	*hma:	*ama A
Six	*enem	*x-nəm A	*hnom	*(ə)num A
Seven	*pitu	*t-ru A	*thu:	
Eight	*walu	*m-ru A	*ru:	
Nine	*c/siwa	*s-ɣwa B	*C.βu:ʔ	
Ten	*púluq	*pwlot D	*fu:t	

I will not be pursuing this relationship any further. The table here is only to suggest a plausible answer to the inevitable question: “who was living here before the Proto-Kra-Dais?” To which we may respond, “Austro-Tais.”

Finally, the only other extant groups are those on the Andaman islands, negritos or Austro-Melanesians, such as may be found in peninsular Thailand and Malaysia (Austroasiatic speakers) and others in the Philippines (who now speak Austronesian languages). Andamanese languages are unrelated to any other known group, but their physical type suggests that they were widespread in the distant pre-Austro-Tai past. Holm (2003:162), citing Chang (1959), notes archeological evidence for the existence of negritos in southwest China. Here again they are well beyond the scope of this paper.

The notion that there were myriad ethnic groups living in southern China that have since disappeared needs to be refined. Even if this may have been true of the distant past, say, ten thousand or more years ago, the various peoples found in late Shang and Zhou times belonged to a finite number of ethnolinguistic families, and the majority of them seem to have been Kra-Dai.

David Holm (2015:205ff) speculates, based on the writings of Izikowitz (1962) and Condominas (1990), that the Yue/Tai, as a cultural entity, were probably engaged in a multiethnic feudal endeavor. Apart from Austronesian, however, no traces of other language stocks survive, begging the question whether Austronesians were the only ones thus involved in the east. In the southwestern area of interest, those falling under Tai feudal domination were primarily Austroasiatic groups, who are called “Kha”, that is, Kra < Proto Kra-Dai \*khra C, but only in the Southwestern Tai speaking area. An exception is the Laha, a Kra group. No doubt originally they displayed similar traits such as swidden cultivation and less stratified social organization. In modern times, if multi-ethnic Laos is an indicator, other ethnic families such as Hmong-Mien or

<sup>4</sup> PAN is from Wolff (2010), PK from Ostapirat (2000), PH from Norquest (2007) and Ostapirat (2004).

Tibeto-Burman do not participate in this system. Indeed until recently, the latter have generally remained outside the sphere of government, living in remote areas. The groups mentioned by Condominas (1980; 1990) and Izikowitz (1962) are all Austroasiatic.<sup>5</sup> And of course "Kha" became the general term for Austroasiatic in Southwestern Tai, though the term is not found in Tai languages proper east of the Red River. That is, the word Kha < \*khraa C in Tai languages only occurs where Austroasiatic speakers are found, and elsewhere only in the Kra languages as the autonym. For the Black Tai, where the reflex for \*khr- is s-, the term *Sa* is applied to Khmu and to Laha, but not to Ksing Mul who are called *Puak* (< PT \*b-) [see fn 18 below]. In the extreme southwest corner of Guangxi, Austroasiatic Bolyu and Red Gelao have lived in close proximity for an extended period (Hsiu 2013), and it would be interesting to know the terms by which they refer to each other.

Did the Li (Hlai), the aboriginal inhabitants of eastern portions of Annam and southeast Lingnan, become feudal dependents of the Tai in the same way as did the Laha further west? Did any of the other scattered Kra groups have similar relations with Tais in Annam, Lingnan, and western Yunnan? This seems possible given that the term used for the "diverse" peoples mentioned in many sources, is often "Li-Lao," in rough reconstructed form, *Rei-Krau*, that is, members of the same linguistic stock, but of course culturally highly distinctive and diverse. Indeed the reconstructed form of Jiao in Jiaozhi seems to belong to the same etyma, Old Chinese \*krâu?. As the Yue moved west, they encountered Austroasiatic speakers living in similar ecological niches, and put them into the same category, *Kraa* or *Krau*, that is, Lao. (Although much is made of the multiethnic referents of "Lao" or "Liao," in fact any non-Kra-Dai referents such as Tibeto-Burman, are only found far to the west and can be explained as will be discussed later.)

### Kra-Dai and the early history of the Vietnamese

Take, as an opening example, the history of the territory known today as Vietnam, and the language called Vietnamese. The branch of Austroasiatic to which the modern Vietnamese language belongs was once called Việt-Mường, but has for some time now been replaced by Vietic, in which Việt-Mường is one subgroup, because many other related languages were discovered, including Phong<sup>A</sup>, Toum, Liha, Ahoe, Ahlao, Arao, Maleng, Malang, Atel, Atop, Makang, Thémrou, Phong<sup>B</sup>, Kri, Mlengbrou, Cheut, Ruc, Sách, Mai and others, all located far to the south in Khamkeut and Khammouane in Laos, and in Quang Binh on the Vietnamese side of the Cordillera (Chamberlain 1998, 2003).

Although this diversity attests to the age of the Vietic branch, the old idea that the branch originated in Jiaozhi can no longer stand. There is no evidence of Vietic, Proto-Việt-Mường or other Austroasiatic speakers living in and around Jiaozhi in the lower Red River basin prior to the 10th or 11th centuries. The Vietnamese language as spoken

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Chamberlain (2012) for a discussion of a Tai-Austroasiatic interaction that is not feudal in nature. It is suggested that this multi-ethnic Tai style polity needs to be more precisely defined as occurring only between certain types of ethnic groups and under certain conditions.

in northern Vietnam, an uneven hybrid in which seventy percent of the vocabulary is Chinese (Phan 2010),<sup>6</sup> is quite homogenous, indicating relatively recent settlement.<sup>7</sup> Although good surveys are lacking, the area of greatest diversity of Vietnamese dialects lies in the North Central and Central regions (Alves and Huang 2007, Alves 2007). To the south of Jiaozhi, away from the coast, Mường speakers range quite far north (see Cuisinier's map), but again do not exhibit a great deal of diversity in the northern locales (cf. Nguyễn 2004). No traces of their language have been recorded in early Chinese records, nor in the languages of the Tai groups who live interspersed with the Mường throughout most if not all of their range.<sup>8</sup>

Taylor (2014) speculates on the linguistic identity of the Lạc people [i.e. Luo Yue], the assumed original inhabitants of the delta, in this way:

What language did they speak? Han immigrants aside, we can plausibly conjecture that much of the lowland population spoke what linguists call Proto-Viet-Muong related to the Mon-Khmer language family that apparently expanded northward from the Ca River plain in modern Nghe An and Ha Tinh Provinces. The geographical connection with other Mon-Khmer languages appears to have been via the Mu Gia Pass from the middle Mekong plain to the Ca River plain. Another plausible conjecture is that the aristocracy that ruled these people, called Lac in Han texts, came from the mountains north and west of the Red River plain and spoke an ancient language related to modern Khmu, another Mon-Khmer language now spoken in the mountains of northern Vietnam and Laos. On the other hand, the Au conquerors who arrived from the northern mountains with King An Duong might be imagined to have spoken a language related to the Tai-Kadai language family that includes modern Lao and Thai. In any case, it is too early to speak of the Vietnamese language.

Taylor's location of Proto-Vietic accords with current thinking, but his estimate of the time depth is a problem. Proto-Vietic is estimated to be approximately contemporary with Proto-Tai (Diffloth and Chamberlain p.c.), and hence would have been located far to the south. There is also no evidence that the Khmu-related Lạc group (which I refer to as Pramic) was ever found any further east than their present locations in Lai Chau. In fact they must have occupied much of northern Laos, prior to the arrival of the Khmu proper, as their group is split between the Pray (Mal) of Xaygnaboury, the Bit of Louang Namtha, the Thai Then of Louang Prabang, and the rest of the branch in Houa Phan

<sup>6</sup> This statement does need some qualification as no doubt many of the lexical items of Sinitic origin are cultural or academic, whereas much basic vocabulary, eye, ear, face, arm ...etc. are clearly Austroasiatic. Nevertheless the figure does indicate the very high level of Chinese contact.

<sup>7</sup> The dialectology propaedeutic here, first expounded by Edward Sapir in 1916, is that small areas with greater dialect variation are older than larger less diverse areas and represent the point of dispersal.

<sup>8</sup> As used in this paper, the term Mường refers only to what I tentatively refer to as Mường proper, spoken mostly in Thanh Hoá and points north. It probably includes Nguon, but probably not the Nha Lang or Toum-Liha group or other more distantly related subgroups of Vietic.

(Diffloth and Badenoch p.c.). Some are also found in Phongsaly, adjacent to Yunnan, and Lai Chau. There are also true Khmu (Khmuic) found in Vietnam along the Lao border as far south as Nghệ An.

Taylor then mentions “Tai-Kadai”, rather cursorily, as the language of An Dương, the legendary king who supposedly defeated the Hung kings to gain control of the lower Red River basin. Why this king should be called “Tai-Kadai” and why the Lạc [Luo] must be Proto-Việt-Mường or Khmuic, is not explained.

Churchman points out that,

the ancestors of the people now commonly referred to as Việt (the “Kinh” of Vietnam) were rather late in picking up the term Việt as a group designation for themselves, and they do not appear to have had any name for themselves that was not gleaned from a Chinese literary model. (30)

The main conclusion to be drawn is that the Vietnamese language and ethnicity resulted from the close association between Mường peoples and Chinese colonists in what is now Thanh Hoá and Nghệ An.

The term Mường itself is an exonym, a Tai word meaning (originally) organized settlement or chiefdom (perhaps implying ‘pacified’ or ‘under control’). It was applied to them, not by the Tai, but by the Vietnamese or Sino-Vietnamese colonists, though the dating is uncertain. Had the Vietnamese borrowed the term from Tai at an early time it would have had a different linguistic form since the Northern Branch has cognates such as Yay *puan* A and Sek has *phian* A. The ethnonym is in fact used in Nghệ An to refer to Tai speakers. The Mường refer to the Tais as *nɛw*, from Nyo or Ou (Âu), but call themselves variants of *mɔl* or *mɔu* (Nguyễn 2004), sometimes written as *Mal*, *Mwal*, or *Mwai* (Cuisinier 1948). The Vietnamese form is *Mọi* (C Tone) (Diffloth p.c.),<sup>9</sup> which was also used to refer to the other Austroasiatic peoples of Vietnam, much as the Han Chinese used the term *Man* to mean all “uncivilized savages,” presumably an expansion of a narrower meaning limited to peoples of the Miao-Yao (Hmong-Mien) family (again based upon certain groups of this family such as the Mun who use *Man* as an autonym).<sup>10</sup> We shall see later that in fact the term *Việt* from Yue/Yueh (Old Chinese \*jwət, wat) referred originally to Be-Tai speakers, that is, people of the state of Yue.

The earliest king of the first Vietnamese state was Lê Hoàn. The family name indicates an ethnic Li person (Hlai, Lei = Vietnamese Lê) ostensibly of an indigenous

<sup>9</sup> Another explanation, admittedly more convoluted, is that the term originated with the Sino-Vietnamese Mi, said to be the clan name of the rulers of the states of Chũ and Yue, that may have been applied to the Kam-Tai groups pejoratively. The main evidence here is that both the Chinese reconstruction (\*mjie B, mie B, me?) [Chinese B = Tai C] and the Vietnamese *Mọi* have the C tone. Schuessler and others have suggested that this word meant ‘bear’ as in KS, Hlai, and Tai, but ‘bear’ always takes the A tone making that interpretation untenable, the graph actually means ‘goat, or bleating of a goat.’ Cf Chamberlain 1991d for further discussion. The Tai language known as Moey or Meuy C tone, very similar both in language and culture to the Red Tai, probably belongs here as well.

<sup>10</sup> Actually *Man*, *Mien*, *Mun*, *Mong*, *Hmong*, *Hmu*, etc. are all cognate forms of this autonym that means simply ‘people’ or ‘clan.’



noble family, a Kra-Dai ethnonym (OC \*rəʔ, rəi) that merged with the Chinese clan name and was used in proper names to designate ethnicity (Schafer 1967). The Sino-Vietnamese *l-* initial indicates it came into the language from Middle Chinese of the Tang period. We need to keep in mind that the early histories of the area were all written in Chinese by Chinese. Use of Chinese characters to write Vietnamese language, called *chữ nôm*, did not begin until the 13th century and was not common until the 15th century.

The conferral of this exonym on the Mường implies that prior to their living in organized settlements, justifying the name, they or their forbears had a different social formation, perhaps as hunter-gatherers or rudimentary swiddeners, living in upland forests, closer to the pattern of the Vietic speakers found further south prior to contact with the Tais.

The old Hlai term for ethnic Chinese was “Moi” (Proto-Hlai \*C-mə:y [Norquest]) but with the A tone, though what this might mean is difficult to fathom. Most probably they are unrelated.<sup>11</sup>

As for other Austroasiatic branches, the newly classified members of the Pramic branch of Austroasiatic (formerly the Mal-Pram subgroup of Khmuic),<sup>12</sup> including languages like Khang and Ksing Mul, do spill over from Phongsaly into Lai Chau and points east, but the relationship to Vietic is not close. The branch closest to Vietic is Katuic far to the south, sometimes referred to as Vieto-Katuic. (Diffloth 1991, Alves 2005)<sup>13</sup>

More recently, John Phan (2010) argues that most historians of Vietnam have ignored the linguistic situation and concludes that:

Chinese speakers native to Annam (by which I mean the Red, Ca, and Ma River plains) shifted to the local “Proto-Viet–Muong” language around the turn of the first millennium CE... (3)

... it is popular to believe—even just a little—in the “Vietnameseness” of the first millennium polities, even (and often) as far back as the Dongsonian rebellions of the Trung [Zheng] sisters. On the other hand, it is also popular to understand lowland Vietnamese culture as Sinicized and therefore, civilized, as opposed to the primitive cultures of the highlands. These are clearly simple or ugly stereotypes that are logically and historically indefensible, yet they find their way into the most sophisticated works... [The arguments] imply that a recognizable culture for the Vietnamese, like their language, formed during the first few centuries of independent kingship, rather than in a vague and distant, pre-Chinese era. (23)

Phan argues that the language shift that gave birth to Vietnamese arose from contact between what he calls Proto-Việt-Mường and Chinese colonists in the deltas of the Red, Ma, and Ca rivers. But he presents no evidence for the existence of these Việt-Mường

<sup>11</sup> In Thailand, the word *muay* A1 is used to describe stereotypically Chinese facial characteristics, though the term is undoubtedly of Swatow origin used by Sino-Thais themselves.

<sup>12</sup> Personal communications, Nathan Badenoch and Gérard Diffloth.

<sup>13</sup> The idea of an AA homeland along the middle Yangtze proposed by Norman and Mei has been largely refuted. (See Sagart 2008)

speakers in the Red River delta prior to this time, since they are known to have originated further south. A more plausible hypothesis would be that the shift occurred among the Chinese in the south (Ma and Ca) first, as I have intimated in previous studies, prior to the time they moved north to defeat Jiaozhi and establish the Vietnamese nation (cf Taylor 1983).

Phan's treatment of the Mường here is rather brief though he devotes more attention to it in his thesis (2013). As in many writings on the Vietnamese past, Kra-Dai is ignored. This omission calls into question his main argument that Mường borrowed directly from Middle Chinese. Rather Mường most probably borrowed from Tai languages rather than from Middle Chinese as more than fifty percent of the forms he cites have Tai cognates (just at first glance). Tai languages are tessellated with Mường throughout the latter's entire range, as can easily be seen on the map provided by Cusinier (1949), whom he derides unnecessarily and thereafter ignores along with her comparative wordlist in *Rites Agraires* (1951). Tai interspersing can also be seen clearly in the map of Robequain (1929). In other lexical domains, Mường is widely acknowledged to have borrowed heavily from Tai (cf. Condominas 1980), and Tai contacts with Chinese obviously occurred much earlier and more consistently than did Mường contacts with Chinese. Thus while I can readily sympathize with Phan's view of prior histories as immersed in an uncritical nationalism, by excluding Kra-Dai from all consideration I fear he is guilty of the very sins he finds so deplorable in others.<sup>14</sup>

### Kra-Dai

Now that we can, with some confidence, set aside Austroasiatic as the stock of original inhabitants in the Red River Delta, and from south China generally, we need to examine what remains. The area that concerns us is China south of the Yangtze, most especially the lands that encompass the modern day provinces of southeast Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Hubei, Gan, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangxi, Guangdong, Hainan, northern Laos, and northern Vietnam at least as far south as Thanh Hoá and Nghệ An and extending to the Col des Nuages. Prehistorically this would encompass the high Bronze Age cultures of Dian and Đông Sơn.

Now let us overlay onto this territory the distribution of languages classified as belonging to the stock designated as Kra (Ostapirat 2000). The problem has been that many historians and anthropologists have rather loosely bandied about the term "Tai" or "Tai-Kadai" as if it were a homogenous group, without examining either the history of the term itself, the depth and breadth of its subgroupings or the larger stock to which it belongs. When the historical linguistics of the family is mentioned at all, it usually begins with Proto-Tai, and its postulated and much-discussed homeland located along the Guangxi-Vietnamese border (Gedney 1966), that is, the home of the Nung and the Thô on the Vietnamese side and the southern Zhuang languages on the Chinese side,

<sup>14</sup> The variation described by Phan among only three dialects is not really significant. b~v, r~h, for instance are common in the Tai languages adjacent to the locations of his dialects, and certainly not indicative of a very great time-depth.

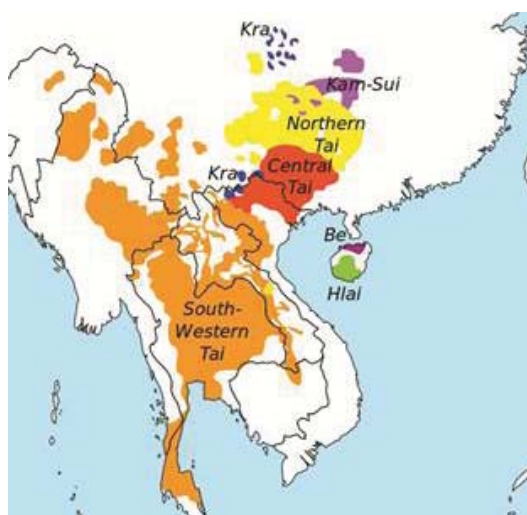


Figure 1. Approximate locations of the Kra-Dai languages (Wikipedia Commons)

all belonging to the Central branch of the Tai ethnolinguistic family as classified by Li Fang Kuei (1977). This area is linguistically the most diverse and hence deemed to be the oldest. Following the tenets of dialectology Gedney (1967) speculated that the age of Proto-Tai was approximately 1500-2000 years. In personal communications he would often make a rough comparison to the Romance languages in Europe, thus leaning more towards the earlier date.

Recently David Holm (2010) has ventured that much of the diversity in the Central Tai branch can be explained by closer examination of the military and migratory history of each location in the

southern Zhuang area, leaving room not only for additional interpretation and revision of the original hypothesis, but for intriguing new directions for research.<sup>15</sup>

The Kra-Dai stock itself is very diverse, much more so than the Romance languages. It must therefore be quite old, perhaps, as we shall see, dating back to the latter part of the 2nd millennium BCE. As research stands now, the stock is comprised of three main families, Kra, Hlai, and Kam-Tai. The latter is further split into Kam-Sui and Be-Tai.

Geographically Hlai is relatively far away from Kra, but their divergence from Kam-Tai suggests that both languages split away to the south at an early date, and

occupied a contiguous area stretching from southeastern Sichuan to Hainan island, including the territory in between that later became Annam and Lingnan, and predating the Kam-Tai in this area. A number of Kra languages are still found scattered here such as Laha and Lachi, Paha, Buyang, and Pubiao. The earliest dates for this movement are difficult to

calculate, but some idea may be gained by examining the historical background to the dispersal of the three main families of the Kra-Dai stock.

The state of Chǔ appears in the historical record in the 12th century BCE, at the tail end of the Shang dynasty, and lasts through the Zhou dynasty, until its defeat by Qin in 223 BCE.

<sup>15</sup> It can be said that if historians are at fault for lack of precision in their examination of linguistic facts, historical linguists, ostensibly interested in the reconstruction of the past, are often equally at fault for narrow-mindedness leading to lexical deficiency by focusing only on the formal properties of language, providing glosses that are terse in the extreme and providing no context that would allow for at least a modicum of understanding of the daily lives of the speakers providing the information and their histories.

The state was located along the middle Yangtze (the modern provinces of Hubei, Hunan, and parts of Jiangxi and Guizhou). My hypothesis is that the ancestors of the Kra-Dai stock originated here. One of the most striking pieces of evidence is the nearly identical reconstructions for the terms Kra and Chǔ.

For Chǔ 楚 we have the following:

Karlgren No. 88

OC \*tɕ'jo

MC \*tɕ'jwo: (=Tai C)

Baxter and Sagart (2014)

OC \*S-ɾaʔ

Schuessler (2007)

OC \*tɕhjwo B (B tone in Chinese = C tone in Kra-Dai)

Later Han \*tɕha B

Minimal Old Chinese (OMC) \*tɕhraʔ (= C tone)



Figure 2. Probable locations of Kra and Rei (Hlai) by the early to mid Spring and Autumn Period

And for Kra we have Ostapirat's reconstruction

\*kra C. (< Pro-Kra-Dai \*khra C )

Taking the plausible association one step further, Pulleyblank (1983: 413) describes the relationship between Xia (the dynasty/ethnonym) and Zhou which would in fact account for the Chǔ who identified themselves with Xia:

There may have been small Chinese-speaking aristocracies ruling over non-Chinese subject populations; or, given the tradition of an earlier Hsia [Xia] dynasty, which may have been the originator of the writing system, the Shang rulers could have been originally non-Chinese speakers who had adopted the language of their Hsia subjects. The same applies to the Chou [Zhou], who were evidently already using the (Chinese) written language of the Shang before the conquest, and whose descendants later identified themselves as Hsia.

With this in mind, the reconstructed forms for Xia夏 (and 假) make perfect sense, and we can assume that Kra was the probable autonym of the main ethnic group that came to populate the state of Chǔ, and perhaps earlier. It is important to note that all forms, for Xia, Chǔ, and Kra take the C tone.

Schuessler Xia 夏 OC ɣa<sup>B</sup> (B=Tai C)

LH ga<sup>B</sup>

OMC \*graʔ

jiǎ 假 OC ka B

LH ka B  
 OCM \*krâ?  
 Baxter and Sagart 夏 Xià \*[ɣ]ʃra?  
 假 jiǎ \*kʃra? (= C Tone)

The Proto Kra-Dai reconstruction would be something like \*khra C, although caution must be exercised because this would include only PSWT \*khraa C and Proto-Kra.<sup>16</sup> (Chinese B tone class is equivalent to Kra-Dai C). Not only do the tones match, but the alternation between the rounded diphthong and the unrounded vowel in Scheussler's reconstruction of Chǔ is mirrored in the case of Kra as well, even within different branches of Gelao. \*kra C and \*krau C (Oatapirat 2000), the diphthong probably representing a subsequent development from an earlier \*-aa.<sup>17</sup>

The semantic shift from the autonym of the Kra to 'mountain people' or 'enfeoffed people' must have taken place with the arrival of the Yue who came to dominate the original Kra or Krau and Li or Li-Lao inhabitants in Lingnan and Annam. We see as in fn. 17 that Jiao in Jiaozhi seems to derive from Old Chinese \*krâu?. As the Laha were enfeoffed by the Black Tai, so too the Austroasiatic speakers in the Sip Song Chǔ Tai (Khmu and Ksing Mul, and later others to the south and west), all became known as *Kha* in Tai and the word is attested in the Ram Khamheng Inscription of the late 13th century in the north-central region of what is now Thailand.

That this is the origin of the ethnonym "Lao" has been the source of some speculation, despite the tone category being wrong. Schafer (1967:48) suggests that while the term originally applied to the Gelao, by the Tang period it was very widespread and "Lao" was being used to refer to other ethnic groups as well. To the east, however, these all belong to various branches of the same linguistic stock. A similar conclusion is drawn by Von Glahn (1987) and earlier by Pulleyblank (1983). The languages belonging to the Kra family as well as to Kam-Sui indeed are still found in the southern portion of what was once the Chǔ state.

As Pulleyblank (1983:433) suggests,

It may not be going too far to suggest that there was a continuum of Tai-related peoples from the coast of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and northern Vietnam stretching inland through Kweichow into Yunnan and north into Hunan and southern Szechwan. No doubt they were already somewhat differentiated in culture and language before the coming of the Chinese, having adapted to the different environments in which they had lived.

Clearly related are the Pramic terms for the Khmu: Ksing Mul *klau*, Phong *kəkau*,

<sup>16</sup> So far as I am aware, the only Central Tai cognate is /chaa C1/ from Western Nung (Nung Cheuang) in Lao Cai where it is glossed by Gedney (in Hudak 2008) simply as "mountain people." The initial consonant reflex set kh- ~ x- ~ ch- ~ s- as found in this word, and in others such as 'egg,' 'dove,' 'to beg', etc is reconstructed as \*khr-.

<sup>17</sup> Oatapirat's \*krau is in fact nearly identical to Schuessler's reconstruction of Jiao in Jiaozhi, i.e. \*krâu?, final glottal stop indicating the C tone.



*təkau*, and the Mun (Hmong-Mien) form *təkaw* (these forms courtesy of Nathan Badenoeh), forms that were apparently caught up in what might be referred to as a “Lao” ethnonymic swath descending southwest through eastern Sichuan, Guizhou, Hunan, western Guangxi, eastern Yunnan, the tip of northwestern Vietnam, and Laos. This includes Lue as well, but the term is not applied to the other Tais of northwestern Vietnam. Indeed the Lao themselves have a tradition that their origins are in Meuang Boum on the upper Nam Tè (Black River) well within the swath. To the south Thays of the Houa Phan came to be called Ai Lao.

To summarize, the identification of Kra with Chǔ and Xia seems well established. The reconstructions are nearly identical, the same tone class, the same vocalic alternation, and the same geographical area.

To take the matter one step further, the Old Chinese forms for Li 李, Baxter’s \*C.rəʔ and Schuessler’s \*rəʔ could belong here as well, as Hlai would also have broken away from Chǔ at an early date as well but to the east, perhaps during the early Spring and Autumn Period. The internally reconstructed autonym for Proto-Hlai \*hləy A (Norquest), is very close to Baxter and Sagart’s and Schuessler’s OC forms for 梨 \*C.r[ə][j] and \*rəi respectively, the latter may represent the earlier proto-form when it was more widespread on the mainland. Both Kra and Hlai broke off prior to the introduction of iron as all three groups (Kra, Kam-Tai, and Hlai) have distinct etyma (Ostapirat 2008:631).

The Chǔ homeland is not a new idea. Ballard (1985:165) cites archeologists’ findings that “Wu and Chǔ interacted more with each other than with Chou [Zhou].” He also cites Briggs’ suggestion that Yue and Chǔ were probably Tai, though without further elaboration. Ballard (169) goes on to observe that, “Sinicization of the southern Changjiang (Yangtze) basin was not complete until the Tang dynasty; northern Jiangsu was sinicized by the third century BC, but Zhejiang not until after the third century AD.” There is less information available further west, but no doubt a similar situation existed there. Yan (1983), also cited by Ballard, writes that, “Zhuang-Tong [Kam-Tai] or Miao-Yao had once constituted the substratum of Chǔyu, while the elements of the Han language only instituted [sic] its superstratum.”

More recently, Behr (2006) relates that the many non-Chinese words in ancient Chǔ bronze inscriptions derive from Kra-Dai, not from Austroasiatic or Hmong-Mien who had originally been supposed to reside in the territory designated as the state of Chǔ.<sup>18</sup>

The work of Holm (2015) and other Chinese scholars assumes that Kra-Dai originated in the states of Wu and Yue, and spread to the west and southwest. I find this problematic as it does not easily account for the westerly distribution of Kam-Sui and Kra. Based upon this evidence, there is good reason to assume that the ancestors of Kra-Dai originated in the late Shang period in what became the state of Chǔ. On grounds of the considerable diversity within Kra, I suggest that the Kra broke away first, moving south and southwest, perhaps around the beginning of the Chǔ period, well before the introduction of iron. Hlai and Tai followed next, while Kam-Sui shifted only slightly

<sup>18</sup> Examples cited are from the Warring States period (ca. 5th BCE), including words for ‘one’, ‘white’ and ‘thick.’ A few examples that look as if they may be related to Austroasiatic and Miao-Yao are from edited texts of the mid-Han period and later.

south from their original locations, within the boundaries of the ancient Chǔ state.

Supporting this, Ostapirat (2005) divides Kra-Dai into two main contact groupings, Kra and Kam-Sui on the one side and Hlai and Be-Tai on the other, western and eastern. This seems to agree with the geographical distribution, as well as lexical evidence provided by Zheng and Ouyang (1993), cited by Norquest (2007:15), that the Hlai lexicon shares forty-two items exclusively with Tai, but only thirteen exclusively with Kam-Sui.

Von Glahn (1987) describes Klao peoples moving north from the Guizhou plateau across the Yangtze into Luzhou in southeast Sichuan in the 4th century AD. He notes (24) that records from the 980s state there were 2,415 households of Klao in southern Lu, and that during the Tang they comprised the majority of the native population there. These are perhaps the same people that Zhang (1993) describes as a group of Gelao, the Yiren, calling themselves *gau*, found in southeastern Sichuan, though Tang sources state that they arrived from the north. Von Glahn (1987:21) likewise informs us that: “textual and archeological evidence from the Song shows that Klao society was based on a complex forest economy centered on shifting cultivation.”<sup>19</sup>

It is well known that Chǔ was embroiled in major conflicts during the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BCE) and the period of the Warring States (475-223 BCE). With the assistance of Yue, located on the coast to the east around the mouth of the Yangtze, Chǔ overran Wu and later Yue itself, the latter in about 333 BCE, resulting in migrations southward along the coast by local princes and princelings, establishing minor states at Dong Yue (Zhejiang), Min Yue (Fujian) and Nan Yue (Canton), and lesser ones so numerous they became known as the Bai Yue or Hundred Yue (cf. Arousseau 1923). These we take to be the ancestors of the Be-Tai family. Though their languages were absorbed by Chinese on the coast, their substrata are still evident and have lent to southern Chinese dialects many otherwise unexplainable characteristics (see especially Ballard 1985, and Bauer 1987, 1996). Further to the west, where the Chinese presence was less, the Yue languages have survived largely intact.

What happened further inland is less clear. Communication between the two areas was obstructed by rugged mountain ranges. The ancestors of the Kam-Sui family were probably found in the interior, not far from their present locations in Guizhou, Hunan, and northern Guangxi. The language called Lakkia, which is closer to Kam-Sui than to Be-Tai (Solnit 1988) and is spoken today in central eastern Guangxi, may have originated in northwestern Guangdong (Haudricourt 1966), bordering on Hunan, and together with Biao is the easternmost Kam-Sui language known so far.

<sup>19</sup> Von Glahn also describes the previous inhabitants of the area, the Bo (*puək*) people whom he also associates with the Dian culture. This ethnonym, *puak* if it is the same, became an ethnonym for Ksing-Mul. It is also applied to a subgroup of Bit, *bii puak*, as opposed to another one called *bii laaw* (Badenoch personal communication). In northwestern Vietnam, some Black Tai meuang had incorporated the Ksing Mul into their fiefdoms, so that the term came to designate that social class, kept separate, however, from the Khmu (*Sa* < \*khraa C), and the Laha (*Sacha* in Black Tai) (Phomsombath 1974). However, the term has likewise been applied to Kra speakers.

## Kra (Krau, Klao, Tlao, Lao)

From the admittedly small amount of historical evidence that is currently available or accessible for territories occupied by the Kra family, it appears that they were originally much more widespread, inhabiting parts of Sichuan, northwest Hunan, and western Guangxi as well as Guizhou. We have conservatively estimated the time depth for Proto-Kra at approximately 3000 BP, indicating a somewhat earlier date for Proto-Kra-Dai especially given the close link between Kra, Chũ, and Xia.

In her early study of Gelao history, Inez de Beauclair relates that “Lao” occurs first in the Chinese records in the territory of Yeh Lang [Guizhou] in 116 BC, and again under the Han in the area of Hsiang Chün [Xiang Jun]. She also concludes that P’o [Bo] (*puak*) and Gelao were closely related groups or even one and the same. This relationship is supported by Edmondson and Yang (2008) in discussing the autonym *Kam*, as often preceded by *laak* (*luuk* ‘child’ in Thai) and note that the autonym in one Lachi dialect spoken along the Sino-Vietnamese border is *li po*, where the first syllable is the Lachi correspondence for ‘child,’ and *po* is said to be the “name of an ancient people.” Perhaps it may correspond to Proto-Tai \*buak, a (potentially pejorative) pluralizing particle. She continues (De Beauclair 1946:365):

The Hsiang Chün [Xiang Jun] extended to present Kwangsi. So at this early period, when the Lao first appear under a distinct name as a separate group, in written history, they are represented in Kweichow and Kwangsi. It is generally believed that their original homes were at the Szechwan-Shensi [Shaanxi] border, from where they descended southwards in the 5th century BC.

Although it is often cited as an example of imprecise identification of ethnic groups in Chinese histories, the application of “Lao” to Tibeto-Burman groups in Yunnan and Sichuan may have a logical explanation when the Kra are considered in Shu history, as they appear beginning in the 4th century CE and continue well into the Liang. De Beauclair concludes (1946:367):

Recapitulating the history of the Lao up to the time of the T’ang dynasty it may be said that the Lao appear during the Han Dynasty in Kweichow, Hunan and Kwangsi, and can be found in Szechwan from the time of the Chin Dynasty in great number. They entered from the southeast crowding out the original inhabitants. It is said that they now lived among the Chinese. This close contact must be kept in mind as an important cultural factor. At the time of the Liang Dynasty they seem to be at the height of their power. It may be inserted here, that certain scholars were induced to connect them to the present-day Lolo. This however does not agree with the occurrence of the Lao as far east as Kwangsi and Hunan. Nor is it in conformity with the cultural traits as handed down by the records.

Writing in the early 1940s in Anshun, and with limited resources, these insights by de Beauclair are remarkable and go far towards eliminating much of the ambiguity that

surrounds the ethnic identity of the term Lao, especially when we realize that the term was originally applied to the Gelao and Kra, and only later and by association to the Lolo-Burmese groups who had been living in close proximity. The Lao (Kra) seem to have played a much larger role in early pre- and proto-history of southern China than has been previously been acknowledged.

With respect to southern geographic locations of the Kra, Pulleyblank (1983:433) writes:

It is interesting to note that the Lao are mentioned in works of the Southern dynasties far to the southeast in northern Vietnam. In 537 a local rebel named Li Fen ..., when defeated and pressed by the Chinese governor of Chiao-chou (Hanoi), tried to take refuge in the "valleys (tung 洞) of the Ch'ü-lao 屈僚" but was killed and handed over to his pursuers (Ch'en shu 1:2-3). The unusual disyllabic form Ch'ü-lao [< Gelao] ensures that this is not merely a generalized use of Lao to refer to any kind of southern barbarian.

Weera Ostapirat (2000) classifies the Kra languages into six groups, of which Gelao, Lachi, Laha, and Buyang have subgroups, while Paha and Pubiao (Laqua) are monotypic. The languages are highly diverse and are distributed over an area that includes southeast Sichuan, Guizhou, eastern Yunnan, western Guangxi, and northern Vietnam (Son La, Lào Cai, Hà Giang provinces), indicating a family of great antiquity very widespread in the past. Several of the languages are highly endangered and no doubt survive due to the remoteness of their locations. To this list Edmondson (n.d.) has added the Nung Ven or Anh (?ain) language spoken in Cao Bang Province of Vietnam, belonging to the Buyang group, as well as several others belonging to Gelao. Finally, quite far to the east, Holm (2003:160) notes two villages on the western outskirts of Nanning whose language is referred to as Buyang, indicating a possible abutment with Li (see Churchman quoted below). He also relates that in northwestern Guangxi the local Buyei and Zhuang consider the Buyang to be the original inhabitants and carry out special ceremonies in their honor as spirits of the land and fertility. Holm suggests that the Buyang, as original inhabitants of Guanxi, may have been pushed into the uplands by in-migrating Buyei. I believe we should also consider the possibility that they preferred the upland habitat and subsequently came to be dominated administratively by the Buyei.

Ostapirat's Kra subgrouping is as follows:

- South-Western Kra
  - Western Kra
    - Gelao* (North, South, Southwest)
    - Lachi* (North, South, Southwest)
  - Southern Kra
    - Laha* (North, South)
- Central-Eastern Kra
  - Central Kra
    - Paha*

## Eastern Kra

*Buyang* (North, South)*Pubiao*

Many autonyms of Kra peoples derive from the root form \*khra C, realized in a number of variations and providing a glimpse of the family's linguistic diversity.

Gelao: klau ~ ye ~ ʔɬu ~ va ~ u (all have C tone)

Laha: khlá ~ ha (C)

Lachi: hu (C)

Paha: ha (has B tone, but several other examples of this C<B irregularity occur)

Pubiao: guaa (C) \*note also the *-qua* of Laqua, and *tcha-* of Qabiao

There are no cognate forms known so far from Buyang languages. Note that these are not the only autonyms found in Gelao, but the only ones with consistent cognates. The autonym provided by Edmondson (above) is of potential historical interest as it seems to refer to Buk or Buak. It is not known whether cognates for this name occur elsewhere in Kra.

The level of language diversity within Kra indicates a very early dispersal over a wide area. They are considered the autochthonous peoples in Guizhou (De Beauclaire 1946), and western Guangxi (Holm 2003) and no doubt ranged over much of the western three quarters of northern Vietnam. At some pre-Yue period they must have abutted the Li, and hence, beginning in the Tang, the doublet Li-Lao came to be used in reference to the most uncivilized or unsinicized peoples.

Liang Min and Zhuang Junru (1996) have posited a Buyang component in the Min Yue and Nan Yue groups to the east of the Luo Yue, but this seems much too far east, and a more likely candidate would be Li, especially at this time depth and given the closer affinity between Tai and Li as opposed to Tai and Kra.

An archeologist, Yang Hao (1999) has noted the distinctive features of Nan Yue as opposed to the Eastern Yue, but it seems likely that these were due to influence from the Li rather than the Kra. As mentioned above, there seems to be a general supposition that all Kra-Dai people moved from east to west, due no doubt to the prominence of Bai Yue as a unifying concept, which itself resulted from the Qin and Han invasions, the first official Chinese contact with this part of the south, and the first recorded history of the area. The linguistic evidence though, is more reliable and compelling, and does not tell the same story where Kra is concerned. It would be interesting to examine Yang Hao's work in the light of this linguistic evidence, and the position of the Rei on the mainland.

Finally, linking the two groups Lao and Li (Kra and Rei), Pulleybank continues (1983:433):

As a separate term, Li occurs already at the beginning of the Later Han and is frequent thereafter with reference to the natives of Kwangtung and northern Vietnam (Ruey 1956). Ruey is at pains to distinguish the Li and Lao as separate peoples, though he thinks they were related and shows that they had important



cultural traits in common. It may not be going too far to suggest that there was a continuum of Tai-related peoples from the coast of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and northern Vietnam stretching inland through Kweichow into Yunnan and north into Hunan and southern Szechwan. No doubt they were already somewhat differentiated in culture and language before the coming of the Chinese, having adapted to the different environments in which they had lived.

He suggests that *Li* and *Lao* are etymologically connected, as I do below, but with a somewhat different phonological history.

In the Pramic branch, the forms Ksing Mul /hrii/, Odu /raj/ and Kanieng /rii/ in Houa Phan Province are exonyms that refer to Tais (but not to Lao, pace Ferlus, as there are no true Lao speakers in this area). Furthermore, as noted above, the Pramic terms Ksing Mul *klau*, Phong *kəkau*, *təkau* actually refer to Khmu. One possible explanation is that the latter are perceived as closely associated with Lao, as other Khmu further east

were closer to Lue or Yuan, and are called *khmu luuu* and *khmu juan*.

Badenoch (personal communication) suggests that the Lue /luuu C/ autonym belongs here as well, in spite of the interesting inter-ethnic dynamics which would need to be explained.<sup>20</sup> The tone class of Lue, which is C, fits nicely, indicating it would have to be derived from the Kra/Chǔ form rather than from the Li/Hlai side. Geographically it makes more sense, for the time being, to assume that the Pramic forms are derived from this same source as

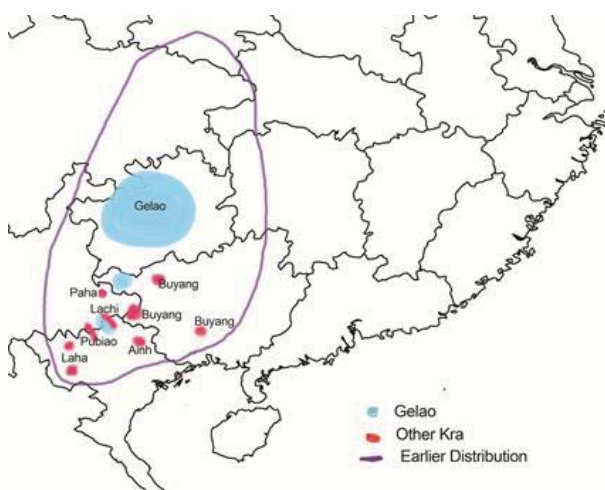


Figure 3. Present-day distribution of Kra languages (in red and blue) and the approximate former territory (northern portions following de Beauclair)

well, unroundedness taking precedence over tongue position.

This still does not explain the A tone of Lao /laaw/ which is commonly assumed to be derived from the same source as Gelao. One possibility though, is that forms such as Old Chinese \*krau? ‘Jiaozi’ lost glottalization, conceivably at a time after they had become separated from other Kra speakers, and developed the A tone rather than C in some locations, that is, \*krau? < \*krau A < rau A < lau A.<sup>21</sup> More likely though, the two words simply became confused due to the phonological and semantic similarities.

<sup>20</sup> Once during a discussion with Lue elders in the district of La in Odomxay province in northern Laos it was explained that when Lue people are looking to establish a new village, they always try to select a location where there are Khmu villages nearby in order to ensure a source of hired labor. Thus the association here between Tai and Khmu is very close, albeit socially asymmetrical.

<sup>21</sup> Pulleyblank (1983:432) notes that: “A third reading of 撩 LMC \*liaw and EMC \*lew is irrelevant; it belongs to an old word meaning “to hunt at night” and has nothing to do with the name of the Kelao, but it is sometimes erroneously found in Western language references to the Lao.

Schluessler (2007) has the following:

牢 lâu	LH lou	OCM *rû	(in Ai Lao)
[哀 ?âi]	LH ?âi	OCM *ʔâi	(in Ai Lao)]
老 lâu B	LH lou B	OCM *rûʔ	( <i>Lau</i> = Tai C)
獠 liau	LH leu	OCM *riâu	( <i>Liao</i> )

As mentioned above, Schluessler remarks that 交 jiǎo \*krâuʔ seems to be cognate, lending further support to the idea that Jiaozhi (Viet. Giao Chi) 交趾 or 交趾 was a Kra-Rei entity.

### Hlai (Li, Rei)

Emerging first in the south, although at what period is unrecorded, the Li appear along the coast of Guangdong west of Canton, and south to Jiuzheng well beyond the Red River Delta. The peninsula that points towards Hainan from Guangdong is named the Li or Lei peninsula, and the indigenous inhabitants of Hainan are also known as Li or Lei. In fact their autonym is Hlai, phonemically /ʎaj/ with a voiceless lateral initial consonant, or /daj/ in some dialects.

Ostapirat (2008:623) writes that:

it is difficult to determine when they migrated to Hainan. Nonetheless, from the fact that the Hlai languages show little of the early Chinese influence that overwhelmed the Tai and Kam-Sui groups as a consequence of the Qin-Han expansion into southern China (ca. 3rd-2nd century BC), we may assume that at least by that time, the Hlai people must have already crossed (or had started to cross) to the island.

Examining the dialect geography of the Hlai languages spread across the southwest and southern portion of Hainan Island, Ostapirat (2008) suggests that the Hlai languages did not enter Hainan via the Lei peninsula but originally crossed the gulf from the mainland south of the Red River delta, rather than via the Lei peninsula as might be assumed given its proximity. This would have been the territory that became the Chinese commandery of Juizhen under the Han. Perhaps, and it might be speculated that the Li were at first dominated by Luo Yue chiefs ('Lạc Lords' à la Taylor) in this area. In either event, the arrival of the Luo, or the Han invasion could have provided the stimulus for some groups of Li to migrate to the island, though equally it may have been a gradual process of exploration.

There can be little doubt that prior to the arrival of the Yue, and later the Chinese, the Li were present on the mainland with a considerable population. Even after this arrival the local population of eastern or coastal Annam must have been primarily Li. Schafer (1969:58) relates that:

In medieval times, the Li were by no means confined to Hainan Island. In the T'ang period they were also well established all along the mainland coast west

of Canton and in northern Vietnam - the Annam of T'ang times. Both on the mainland and on the island they troubled the T'ang regime, as when they rebelled in the Hanoi area because of onerous taxes and killed the Chinese protector of Annam. ... Their ethnic name Li was easily converted into a clan or surname by the Chinese invaders, so that prominent men in their communities appear in Chinese texts styled "Li so-and-so." The same was true of other non-Chinese peoples, notably the Huang [Ghwang] of the mainland grottoes. Great luster was shed of this ancient name in the year 980, when the remnants of the T'ang protectorate in Annam, precariously preserved, were finally dissolved, and Li Huan (Viet. Lê Hoàn) declared the independence of the people of Vietnam...

In a paper focused on the "Li-Lao" and "Wuhu" corridor territory in southeastern Guangxi during the post Ma Yuan period in Lingnan and Annam, Churchman (2011:70) writes:

The original meaning of "Li" is obscure... as an ethnonym, it seems to have first been recorded in reference to a group of people living outside the Han Empire near Jiuzhen (now the high country of northern central Vietnam, a great distance from the Pearl River drainage area. During the Six Dynasties the ethnonym was never used for people who lived further east than Canton. Instead it was mainly found in provinces along the Pearl River, between the confluence of the Left Hand [Zuo] and Right Hand [You] Rivers [just west of Nanning] and all the way down to Canton.

Churchman's paper indicates clearly that areas of independent and quasi-independent Li (*Rei*) and Kra survived well into the Sui and Tang and even Song periods. They would eventually have evolved close contacts with Yue and Chinese, to a degree where noble houses appeared in Jiaozhi bearing their clan name née ethnonym, unlike those on Hainan who survived largely intact with only a modicum of Chinese influence until the onset of the Song.

Their ethnonym is not recorded very far north. Apart from Churchman's evidence, we do not know how far west its range might be indicated in old Chinese documents. I would like to venture that that the term "Li-Lao" refers generally to the pre-Yue Kra-Dai speakers who, judging from their current geographical locations, must have been widespread and very diverse, inhabiting the lands of eastern Lingnan and Annam, at least as far south as Jiuzhen. In the pre-Yue period, Li groups were found along the mainland coast from Canton to points far south, including Hainan, while the Kra (Lao) were present in the areas slightly further inland to points quite far west and north.

That Li was a recognized ethnic category in Jiaozhi well into the Tang is well attested. Churchman (2010:31) writes:

the name that indicated locals who were recognizably different from the people or subjects of other parts of the empire was Li. Under the Tang there were households in Jiaozhi classified as "Li households" *lihu* 俚戶 who had special administrative status and only paid half the taxes of ordinary citizens.

The Old Chinese reconstruction of Li or Lei is:

Baxter	*C.rəʔ 李, *C.r[ə][j] 梨
Schuessler	*rəʔ 李 and *rəi 梨

And internally for Proto-Hlai

Norquest	*hləy A
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That is to say, apart from the final glide, which would have been a later development, it is not that different from the reconstructed forms for Chǔ and Kra (see above). Though the tone class for the alternate with the final diphthong is A rather than C, the C tone, which is laryngealized throughout the Kra-Dai stock, is commonly represented by a final glottal stop. So it is not difficult to arrive at a scenario where ancestors of the Li (let us call them Rei), like those of the Kra, broke away from the state of Chǔ or even from Yue at an earlier date, perhaps in the Spring and Autumn Period, and moved southeast, settling along the coastal areas of what is now Guangdong and northern Vietnam.

It would be useful to have a clear description of how the two characters were used in the historical documents and at what time periods.

Apart from Churchman's statement just cited, we do not know how far inland the Li may have ranged, but it is plausible to assume that they abutted or overlapped the Kra in many areas such as around Nanning. Their population on the mainland then later merged with Yue arrivals sometime after 333 BCE (or perhaps earlier for Luo Yue) and with Han Chinese. But this cannot have happened very rapidly because we still read of them well into the Tang and Song (see Schafer above). Often they were referred to as Li-Lao, that is to say Rei-Kra, recalling that Lao [*klau C*] is a cognate of Kra.<sup>22</sup>

It is tempting to suggest that Thai or Tai (PT\*day A) is related to PH\*hləy A, as one of the cognate forms is *day* in at least one Hlai dialect. Norquest (272) posits a Pre-Hlai form \*[l] əy, but with a caution that: "if these two forms [PH\*hləy and PT\*day] are truly cognate, then an original lateral is implied which hardened irregularly to \*d in Tai." Nevertheless, since his Pre-Hlai reconstruction is actually Proto-Southern-Kra-Dai, consisting only of Proto-Hlai and Proto-Central-Southwestern-Tai, that is, the branch of Tai where *Tai* is often the



Figure 4. Map of Pearl River Basin: note the locations of the You and the Zuo. Also note the Liu, mentioned below as the early isogloss between Luo and Ou, that is CSW and NT. (Source: Kmusser, 2008 –Wikipedia Commons)

<sup>22</sup> Schafer (1967:53): "An early Sung source notes four kinds of Li-Lao speech, not mutually intelligible, in Yung-chou."



autonym (not true of the Northern Branch), the suggestion is all the more tantalizing. We would have to explain how the correspondence ended up in Hlai and CSW Tai (Luo Yue), but not in NT (Ou Yue), unless the Hlai borrowed the ethnonym from Rei (Li) on the mainland slightly later, after the two had separated, rather than the two forms being directly descended from a common source. This might explain the phonological irregularity. A degree of uncertainty still surrounds this issue.

Looking at the situation more from an Austroasiatic perspective, Michel Ferlus (2006) proposed a similar though less specific association of:

- \*kərii / krii from which are derived Thai, Tai, Li, Hlai, Yi, and,
- \*kəraaw / kraaw which became Lao, Gelao, and Keo

He points out the various ethnonyms of speakers of Vietic languages spoken to the south in Quang Binh and Khammouane (Laos) such as Maleng Kari (məleeŋ kərii), and claims the terms refer to Vietic speakers who live near to Lao (in fact they do not although they are neighbors of the Sek). The term *məleeŋ* means ‘people.’ Ferlus also finds the same transference in the Brou autonym *Tri* or *Chary*, a Katuic language spoken in Quang Tri on the Vietnamese side, and in Khammouane and Savannakhet in Laos. Conceivably, Rei speakers on the Chinese coast could have become confused with Vieto-Katuic peoples, who at that period would have had similar forest-based livelihood systems, or even with early Yue, who were said by some sources to have moved as far south as the Col des Nuages (between Hue and Da Nang).

### Agriculture and environment

It is worth clarifying some of the environmental and cultural terms. Terms such as “hill Tai” or “upland Tai” seem to imply that these Tai speakers are living at high elevations. Sometimes they are even called highlanders, a term usually reserved for Hmong-Mien or Tibeto-Burman groups who practice swidden cultivation high in the mountains. Referring to Tais in this way thus creates confusion. Tais often reside in areas surrounded by mountains, sometimes called “grottoes” or *Dong* (EMC \*down<sup>h</sup> [=Tai B tone]) ‘mountain valley’ or ‘level ground between cliffs and beside a stream’ (Pulleyblack 1983:430), cognate with PT \*doŋ B ‘field’. Until recently, almost all Tai speakers, and most Kam-Sui speakers, so far as I am aware, were lowland wet rice cultivators. In Kam-Tai languages a clear distinction is made between paddy field (PT \*naa A2) and upland swidden field (PT \*ray B). *Dong* indeed became the exonym for Kam-Sui peoples.

Terms specific to wet rice agriculture include ‘rice seedling’, the verb ‘to transplant a seedling,’ ‘a plow, to plow,’ the ‘straw or stubble’ that remains in the fields, the canal or ‘ditch’ for irrigation, the ‘dike or bund’ that separates the paddies, and swamp eels that reside in paddies. All are regular forms reconstructed in Proto-Tai, and most probably in Kam-Tai once the data are complete. Wet rice fields exist both in open plains and in narrow valleys and defiles, using the same techniques. Some swiddening or gardening may be carried out in adjacent upland or sloping areas, but usually for subsidiary crops



other than rice. Terracing of paddies on hillsides is a more recent phenomenon. Thus flat plains and valley floors can be assumed to be the original habitat of the Proto-Be-Tais and most probably Kam-Tais as well.<sup>23</sup>

#### Wet Rice Agricultural Terms

Gloss	PT	PKS	Be-Sek	PHlai	PKra
wet field	naa A2	ʔraa5	naa/nia A2	taa 2	(naa A)
dike between paddies	ʔanA2	can ?	SK ʔal 4	Cifhə:n	-
irrigation ditch	ʔuuaŋ A1	k-njaan	-	-	-
rice seedling	klaa C1	kla 3	SK tlaa 3	[hwiu/viu]	(BY ta laa)
transplant seedlings	ʔdlamA1	ʔdram 1	SK tramA1	[dop/dap]	(dam)
plow	thlay A1	khrai A	SK thay 2	-	-
straw	vaan A2	mpwaan 1	SK viaŋ A?	[ŋwiŋ/ŋiŋ]	(vaaŋ)'
swamp eel ( <i>Fluta sp.</i> )	(C.)ʔian B	tsjen C	-	diēm (Sav)	-
dry field	ray B2	traai 5	(SK) rii 5	[ʔəŋ]	[za C]

Note: Parentheses indicate borrowings. Brackets indicate non-cognate forms (i.e. separate etyma). SK = Sek. BY = Buyang. Sek data from Gedney (1993). Proto-Kra from Ostapirat (2000). Proto-Hlai from Ostapirat (2008), Matisoff (1988), Norquest (2007). Proto Kam-Sui from Thurgood (1988), Ostapirat (2011). Proto-Tai from Li (1977), Chamberlain (unpublished ms). Sav = Savina's Hlai (d=j)

Since the cognates for these rice-related terms are mostly lacking or borrowed in Hlai and Kra languages (see table below), we assume that they were originally swidden cultivators, as many are today, or were until recently. Hlai seems to have developed its own lexicon, ostensibly after having settled on Hainan and become exposed to wet rice agriculture. Several Hlai groups have resided in the lowlands for some time, and gradually adopted wet rice cultivation, ostensibly under Chinese, Be, or other influence, though the terms adopted by the Hlai are not Chinese. All of the Kam-Tai languages maintain a clear distinction between swidden and wet rice fields.

Ostapirat (2011) notes that the term for 'plow' seems not to exist in Proto-Miao-Yao, as might be expected for swidden cultivators. Haudricourt and Strecker (1991) attempt to demonstrate a Proto-Miao-Yao distinction between paddy and upland field, but other terms specific to paddy cultivation are conspicuously absent from their discussion. The earliest use of iron plow shares began in China in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods in the lower Yangtze basin, no doubt among the Kam-Tai people. Evidence suggests that the Old Chinese word for plow may have been a Kam-Tai borrowing from this period (Ostapirat *ibid*).

For political and economic reasons, the swidden-paddy distinction became the indicator of civilization, beginning at least with the Han and no doubt earlier. Indeed

<sup>23</sup> Terms specific to swiddening (dry rice or upland farming) are rarely collected by field workers. Terms such as dibble stick, to poke a hole with the stick, to weed the swidden, to burn the swidden, to clean up the area after the burn, to select the location of the new swidden, etc., are rarely if ever found in word lists and dictionaries, even though some such terms exist in Tai languages, and would be interesting to examine historically in Kra and Hlai.

the bias has been carried into the present by governments as they attempt to increase production on a national level, despite the fact that it has been amply demonstrated by Dove (e.g.1983), Ducortieux (2006), and others, that when measured as a return on labor, swidden cultivation is the most productive, by one calculation anywhere from 88 to 276 percent higher than paddy (Dove 1983). When measured as a return on land, as governments universally prefer, paddy production in absolute terms is of course higher, but this does not include human labor/time spent in paddy preparation, clearing the land, building dikes, two or more years of waiting before the paddies hold water, transplanting, irrigation systems and upkeep, not to mention the cost of buffalo or other draft animal labor and upkeep, time spent in crafting specialized equipment such as plows and harrows, and taxation. That is to say, the practice of swidden agriculture should be viewed as a preference, not as a measure of cultural evolution as is usually portrayed.

Ostapirat (2008) also examines the cultural issues surrounding terms for ‘iron’ and for ‘crossbow.’ Iron in Kam-Tai languages is an old Chinese contact word dating from the Han period or earlier (Kam-Tai \*hlit < -k), but the form does not appear in Hlai and Kra.<sup>24</sup> As the voiceless lateral initial \*hl- in Old Chinese had changed to \*th- by the time of Middle Chinese, the contact must have been earlier. Furthermore, the variation in the final consonants of this word between Tai \*-k and Kam-Sui \*-t implies that the separation of the two families occurred at about the time of the introduction of iron (or at least iron plow shares) around the 6th century BCE in the state of Chǔ.

Crossbow (PT \*hnaa C) is an areal contact form with roots not only in Chinese but also in Miao-Yao and Austroasiatic, but does not occur in Kra and Hlai. Ostapirat notes that Hlai has another word (Proto-Hlai \*vac), although this actually refers to the longbow as the Hlai used only the longbow (Stübel 1937).<sup>25</sup> Ancient Chinese texts state that Hlai aboriginal men were never seen without their bows and their long knives (Schafer 1969). I have seen no similar reports with respect to bows for the Kra groups. It is worth noting that the spectacular illustrations in the Stübel volume provide a glimpse of the Hlai peoples and cultures which, due to their relative isolation, must have remained relatively unchanged for the past two to three millennia.

In previous papers I have presented evidence based upon indigenous histories and Tai zootaxonomies that place the Tais in the lower Yangtze basin. Essentially, organisms with the most extensive north-south ranges have taxa reconstructable in Proto-Tai, whereas organisms found only south of the Tropic of Cancer do not. For

<sup>24</sup> Norquest has Hlai \*hla:k glossed as ‘tin’. If the gloss is correct it would imply the etymon already existed in Proto Kra-Dai (as tin precedes iron and is one of the essential elements in bronze manufacture) and was semantically transferred to ‘iron’ after its introduction subsequent to the splitting off of Hlai. ‘Tin’ is an areal word found in Chinese as well as other groups, with an uncertain etymology.

<sup>25</sup> This is another of those instances where comparative lexicographers need to be more precise in their fieldwork and in their glosses. Schafer (1969:69) cites 12th century sources that say exactly the same thing, “The Li are skilled with the simple bow, the Yao with the crossbow...” The crossbow pictured in Stübel (Figure 217) is from the Yao or Mun group who came to Hainan at a later period, and are called Miao by Stübel.

example, the softshell turtle *Trionyx sinensis* which ranges widely across China and Southeast Asia has consistent cognates in Kam-Tai languages and even in Hlai where it is applied to sea turtles (Chamberlain 1981).

Tai \*faa (SW faa, N fua ~ fuu)  
 Be bi?  
 Sek via  
 KS (Then) fjaa  
 Hlai (Pai-sha) faa

Both species of pythons (*P. reticulatus* and *P. bivittatus*) on the other hand, occur only south of the Tropic. Central Southwestern Tai has correspondences for python (e.g. Lao luam A, Nung num A), but Hlai has a separate unrelated form (PH \*na:n? C), indicating that Hlai split off from Tai or Kam-Tai prior to their move south.

Conspicuous mammals found ranging from Southeast Asia north through southern China as far as the Yangtze or beyond, and which have regular correspondences, include:<sup>26</sup>

<i>Proto-Kam-Tai</i>	<i>Scientific</i>	<i>Proto-Tai</i>	<i>Proto-Kam-Sui</i>
pangolin	Manis	*lin ~ -m B	*lin ~ -m B
Tibetan bear	Ursus	*hmui A	*ʔmu:i A
otter (1)	Lutranæ	*muan C	*bja:n C
civet	Viverridae	*hpen A	*hpan A
muntjac	Muntiacus	*faan A (SW+N)	(Mak) va:n A
Porcupine (1)	Hystrix	*hmen C (CSW)	*ʔmi:n C
<i>Proto-Tai</i>			
rhesus monkey	Macaca mulata	*li:ŋ A	
otter (2)	Lutra	*na:k DL	
hog badger (likely)	Arctionyx	*hluŋ B	
dhole	Cuon /Nyctereutes	*nay A	
serow	Capricornis	*ʔya:ŋ C	
Porcupine (2)	Atherurus	*hrɔn A	

Strictly southern mammals, with ranges limited mostly to areas south of the Tropic, do not have regular correspondences in the various Kra-Dai language families and branches. These include such conspicuous and distinctive animals as gibbon, stump-tailed macaque, pig-tailed macaque, langurs, slow loris, tree shrews, binturong, sun bear, mouse deer (chevrotain), Javan rhinoceros, Sumatran rhinoceros, flying squirrels,

<sup>26</sup> For a more complete treatment see Chamberlain (1977) which discusses the taxonomic complexities of combining historical linguistics and ethnozoology but covers only mammals, crocodilians and saurians. A planned revision of this work to be presented as *Kra-Dai Zoology* addresses all primary animal groups.

and other squirrels. Other fauna (reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, etc.) show the same pattern, but reliable data are lacking for many languages. Good reptilian examples are the large monitor lizards, *Varanus bengalensis* and *salvator*, which do not have consistent cognates even within Southwestern Tai.

With respect to the coastal origins of the Yue, a number of lexical items specific to the coast support the notion that these areas were peopled originally by Be-Tais. These lexical items are not found in Kam-Sui languages suggesting once again that that family belongs in Ostapirat's Northern (western) portion of Kra-Dai, and that Kam-Sui did not originate on the coast. One such form is the word for 'salt-water crocodile' (*Crocodylus porosus*) usually glossed as 'mythical water creature' in Tai languages that are no longer found along the coast.<sup>27</sup> The size and imposing nature of this reptile, which may grow to a length of eight meters, must have left a lasting impression on the minds of the seafaring Yue, to a degree where the taxon has survived not only in Tai languages but as part of the Tai substrata in the Chinese languages of the southern coast:

Proto-Tai \*ŋaak > ŋuək, ŋuuk, ŋɔk, ŋuak  
 鱷. OC \*ŋāk, LH \*ŋak (Schuessler) 'salt water crocodile'  
 < Cantonese: ŋok  
 < Amoy: go'k

That the taxon does not occur in Hlai is important as it indicates that Hlai and Tai were separate prior to their arrival on the coast. After separating from Chǔ, Rei probably traveled to the Cantonese coast by inland routes. Along the northern portion of its former range, Fujian and northern Guangdong, the etyma for *porosus* agrees with the Tai languages, but is conspicuously lacking elsewhere. (We do not know if it occurs in Be.) Had Kra-Dai originated on the southeast China coast as many are claiming, this should not be the case. The fact that the term for crocodile in Hlai appears to derive from the OC word for 'giant salamander,' an inland non-coastal and more northerly animal, supports this conclusion.

But in another example the word for a turtle, specifically the 'giant soft shell turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii* Gray)' is found in the Central Southwestern Tai languages, and is still preserved in Hlai on Hainan glossed as 'turtle', or 'point-nose turtle,' and in several languages from the northern Philippines as simply 'turtle.' No doubt the lack

<sup>27</sup> There is some mystery here as the etymon does not occur in Hlai, although historically this reptile was found along the shores of Hainan as well as nearby along the coasts of Guangxi, Fujian, Guangdong, and Vietnam. Hlai appears to have another taxon, PH \*kəy? (Norquest), that is, with the C tone seemingly cognate either with SWT *khee* ~ *kee* ~ *khia* ~ *hia* 'crocodile (freshwater)' or *hia* ~ *hee* ~ *kia* ~ *chia* ~ *chii* 'water monitor (V. *salvator*)' all of which take the C tone. But semantic confusion between the two is rife. Water monitors are common on Hainan, whereas the crocodile has long been extirpated. In any case all of these forms may relate ultimately to the OC terms for the 'giant salamander' which was found in the basin of the Yangtze, a more northerly animal, OC (?) \*ngieg or \*g'a (Michael Carr personal communication regarding the *Erh-Ya*). It would be reassuring to have both taxa in Hlai, crocodile and *salvator*, for comparison to ensure that the two species have indeed been distinguished in the data. So far this has not been discernable in the available sources.

of specificity is due to the data collection. In fact the distribution of the taxon mirrors that of the species which is found in Hainan and in the northern Philippines, as well as along the southern Chinese coast. This turtle is not, however, found on Taiwan, even though cognates occur in Austronesian languages there, glossed either as ‘softshell,’ or ‘river tortoise,’ so either it may have lived there in former times, or the taxon was introduced from the Philippines. Had it come from the mainland one would suppose that the more ubiquitous *\*faa* for the smaller softshell species would have been used. *\*faa* has no apparent cognates in Austronesian. Interestingly, the *Pelochelys* form does not occur in Northern Zhuang or Pu Yi, again, in keeping with its range. This is the largest of the soft shell turtles (family *Trionychidae*) reaching a length of up to 200 cm, so it is not easily ignored. It lives (or lived as it is almost extinct) in large inland rivers such as the Red and the Black and in brackish water along the coast, even sometimes found at sea.

Proto-South-Central Tai *\*top* < BT, WT, TV: (too) top ‘*Pelochelys* or *Rafetus*’  
 < Savina Tay: (tu) tốp, <Thô of Backan (EFEO) : (tua) tốp

Hlai (Li from Stübel (1937)

Weiss: thöeb ‘turtle’

Geshor: thob ‘turtle’

Proto Hlai (Norquest) *\*thu:p* ‘point-nosed turtle’

(Ostapirat) *\*ʔti:p* ‘soft-shell turtle’

PAN<sup>28</sup> (Wolff) *\*qatipa*, (Blust) *\*qaCipa* ‘river tortoise, softshell turtle’

AN (Philippines, Yap 1973)

Kallaban, Keleyqiq:kateb ‘turtle’,

Ifugao, Rayninan: attob ‘turtle’

The distribution of the taxon implies that the Central Southwestern branch of Tai (Luo Yue) was in contact with Rei (Li), but not the northern branch (Ou Yue), and that one or both was in contact with Austronesian in the Philippines. As mentioned *Pelochelys* does not occur on Taiwan though it is (or was) found in the mainland coastal areas of Fujian. Another large softshell turtle, *Rafetus swinhoei*, the Yangtze Giant Softshell, was found in the Red River, especially well-recorded on the Chinese side in southeastern Yunnan, and in the lower Yangtze River along the Jiangsu-Zhejiang border area. Little is known of its former range, but while the taxon in some Tai languages may refer to *Rafetus*, it is not known whether the ranges or habitats of the two species ever overlapped.

The forms for ‘sea eagle’ and/or ‘cormorant’ which became the Central Southwestern Tai word for ‘greater hornbill’ are addressed below in the discussion of Lo (Luo).

<sup>28</sup> Supporting evidence is mainly from Formosan languages except for one in Sumatra.



## Kam-Sui (Dong, Tong)

Although Proto-Kam-Tai split into two main families around the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BCE) in the state of Chǔ, identifying the ancestors of Kam-Sui in history is not as easy as for the coastal Yue. We do not know how far west the Yue state extended, nor therefore the approximate boundary within the territory of Chǔ between Proto-Be-Tai and Proto Kam-Sui prior to the annexation of Yue by Chǔ in 333 BCE. If Inez de Beauclair's (1946) work is any indication, some muddling of Kam-Sui with Gelao exists in the historical records. Linguistic work has focused on finding cognates for phonological reconstruction (e.g. Thurgood 1988), leaving the lexical material from the Kam-Sui languages either incomplete or insufficiently analyzed. The current locations of Kam-Sui languages extend from eastern Guizhou and southwestern Hunan into northwestern Guangxi, eastern Guangxi and northwestern Guangdong, if we include Lakkia and Biao in the group. The original range may also have included parts of Jiangxi although we know less about this territory. The distribution today is rather sparse, probably indicating a heavy degree of sinicization over most of the former range.

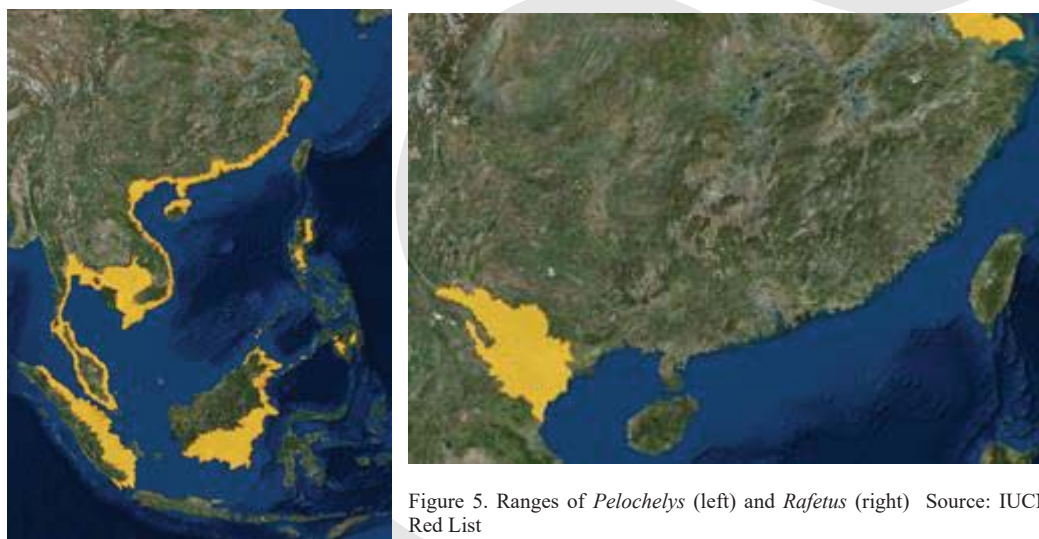


Figure 5. Ranges of *Pelochelys* (left) and *Rafetus* (right) Source: IUCN Red List

Yang and Edmondson (1997) write that already by the Tang Dynasty the Kam were recognized as a separate group, reconstructed as Kalam or Klam, indicating a much earlier period of unity for the various diverse branches of Sui, Ten, Mak, Mulam (Mulao), Maonan and Ai Cham, not to mention Lakkia and Biao further east in northwestern Guangdong. Yang and Edmondson suggest that the ancient name for Guizhou, which was Qian, < *gjam* (ostensibly) < *galam*, may indicate the source. They do not indicate the precise time period, but most of their sources seem to date from the Tang and Song periods. They state that “early chroniclers” describe a migration following the Warring States period from a vague Chǔ-Yue homeland to northern Guizhou via Jiangxi.

Apart from Lakkia, which Solnit (1988) placed closer to Kam-Sui than to other families, the Biao language(s) of northwest Guangdong remain largely unstudied. Andrew Hsiu (2014) notes that Biao (autonym *koŋ pju*) consists of three mutually

unintelligible languages, Shidong, Yonggyu, and Northwestern Biao. I have not seen the study by Liang Min (2002) on the Shidong language. Many forms cited by Hsiu are close to Kam-Sui, but obviously more study is needed.

### Be-Tai (Yue/Việt < \* giwăt, jwət, wat, wat)

Appearing first in Chinese records in the 6th century BCE (Aurousseau 1923), the state of Yue was located approximately in the area of present-day Zhejiang, bordered on the north by Wu and on the west by Chǔ. The southern border, if there was one, is not recorded. The term Yue became the ethnomym Việt of Vietnamese, and Aurousseau believed he was describing the history of the Vietnamese.

For yuè 越, the name of the ancient state, reconstructed forms are:

Karlgren	OC *giwăt		
Baxter and Sagart	OC *[g]wat		
Schuessler	OC *jwət	LH *wat	OCM *wat

With respect to time-depth, Aurousseau implies that the four main Yue principalities on the coast (Zhejiang, Fujian, Canton (Guangzhou), and Annam/Guangxi), or at least their precursors, were already in existence when the Yue state came to an end. This suggests that, in their movements south following the Qin invasion, the Yue nobility had become familiar with the coastal territory and its local populations and probably already had a presence there, but since the Chinese had not yet arrived, no records exist from this early time period.

These four groups must have been formed already by the end of the Tcheou [Zhou], probably between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd centuries BC, since the Nan-Yue are already mentioned in Tchouang-tseu and under the Tcheou they are already talking about the Lo-yue. (Aurousseau p. 249)

Holm (2015) has meticulously brought together convincing evidence from a wide variety of Chinese specialists in linguistics, archeology, and mitochondrial DNA to support the hypothesis that the Yue were indeed Tai. The inclusion of Kam-Sui is less certain. So far there is no clear evidence that the Kam-Sui were ever classified as Yue. Holm provides perhaps the best overview to date on the Yue and their Tai identity. Among the information presented is an interesting feature of the Yue as boatmen and seafarers.

The battles with Chǔ and with other states usually took place on rivers and inland lakes, but the Yue were also given to seafaring, both along the coast and further afield. To this day, Tai communities far inland continue to sing ‘boat songs’ as part of various indigenous ritual practices, and the seas and sea voyages feature in the geography of their spirit world. (Holm 2015:207)

Holm (2015:210) cites the results of Y chromosome testing, carried out and

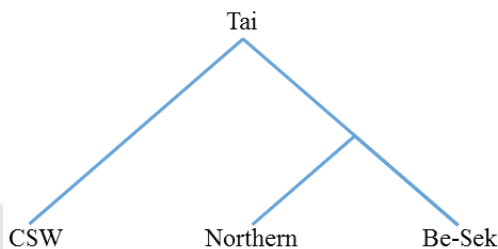
announced by Li Hui in 2002, among peoples thought to be descended from the Bai Yue (hundred Yue). The study identifies one genetically distinct group of descendants who first occupied the Zhejiang-Jiangxi area, and later dispersed away from southeast China into southwest China, Southeast Asia as far west as Assam, following the probable migrations of the Tai speaking peoples. The chromosomal structure of this group is unique and distinct from Han, Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burmans. Apparently Kra peoples were not included, or at least not identified, in the sample.

Describing the well-documented association of the eastern and western Ou (Dong Ou and Xi Ou), Holm concludes that it is:

pertinent to observe that the archaeological evidence and historical records give ample evidence of very close cultural links between the Yue heartland in Zhejiang and the Yue polities in Lingnan, and a well-established sea route affording mobility up and down the coast. In all likelihood, the Lingnan area was one of the destinations for Yue royal clans as they fled southward by sea, out of reach of their powerful enemies to the north, at least for the time being. Once ensconced in their new territories, they would have sought to recreate the ‘valley kingdoms’ they left behind.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from the identification of Yue with Be-Tai, the next most important issue for this family is the position of Sek and Be, and hence the appellation Be-Tai. Both Sek and Be are believed to have broken away from the Tai mainstream prior to the period of reconstructed Proto-Tai. I suggested putting Be and Sek together to form a pre-Proto-Tai association of Be-Sek, on the grounds that both groups were located on or near the coast, Be on Hainan and adjacent coastal areas west of Canton (Ostapirat 1998), and Sek along with Be, because its namesake the Vietic Sác on the Vietnamese side of the Cordillera near the coast (Chamberlain 1998). That both Sek and Be split from the Tai mainstream is attested by the separate development of the palatal final \*-c which becomes -t in Tai but -k in Sek and -ʔ in Be (Ostapirat 2009:50). The following are some examples:

	<i>Sek</i>	<i>Be</i>	<i>Tai (Siamese)</i>
ant	mək	muʔ	mot
fish scale	tlek	liʔ	klet
Chinese cabbage	kək	kaʔ	kaat



Lexically, Be and Sek are closest to the Northern branch of Tai, that is the languages referred to as northern Zhuang in Guangxi and the contiguous Bouyei (Pu Yi) in Guizhou. The isogloss between the northern and central branches of Tai is well defined, that is between northern and

<sup>29</sup> Zhong Chong 鐘翀 (2005) of Kyoto University studied isolated Yue valley kingdoms in pre-Qin Zhejiang, noting that their language remains distinct until the present.

southern Zhuang, unlike the distinction between the central and southwestern branches which is geographically and phonologically rather amorphous. In fact it would seem logical to set back the time period for what we call Proto-Tai and to redraw the Tai family tree placing the Northern branch together with Be-Sek rather than with Central Southwestern, as shown to the left here.

Gedney (1967) noted that Northern Tai was very homogenous, with northern Zhuang and Bouyei being essentially the same language, whereas the Central languages, just on the other side of the isogloss, were very diverse. He was unable to explain this contrast except for alluding to similar situations of relative lack of change over long periods found in many language families throughout the world. However, the variety exhibited by Be and Sek, taken together with the other Northern branch languages, suggests that this branch was equally diverse but that the area of this diversity, located further east in Guangdong, was swallowed up by Chinese. The Northern branch of Tai was comprised of the languages of the Ou Yue, and more specifically the Xi Ou or Western Ou, who arrived in the south sometime after the Luo (Lo) Yue.

### Ou (Əu, Nyo, Âu) and Yi (Yay, Yoy, Ái)

Two groups became especially well-known in Vietnamese history, the Ou and the Lo (Vietnamese Âu and Lạc). Both of these terms appeared originally in the northern Yue areas of Min-Yue (Fujian) and Yue Dong Hai or Dong-Ou (Zhejiang), and apparently referred to subgroups of Yue that were originally perhaps clan or lineage names. The Ou in the north were referred to as the eastern Ou and those in the south as the western Ou. Under the Qin, the inhabitants of the Red River delta were known as Ou-Lo (Âu-Lạc) (Arousseau), though more recently Chinese scholars have maintained the two were never combined (see below).

Ou 甌 is reconstructed as:

Karlgren	22 OC *u, 494 MC *ʔəu (A)
Schuessler	OCM ʔô (A)
Baxter	OC qʰ(r)oʔ or qʰ(r)o (A)

Note also: Ou (區), Ou (歐) and Ouyang (歐陽).

Arousseau calls them Ngeou, and others call them Ngâu, with a nasal initial (possibly intended as a palatal nasal ɲ-). The nasalization is further borne out by the corresponding Mường term for Tai which is consistently *ɲew* throughout all of the dialects (Nguyễn 2004), the diphthong indicating a Middle Chinese period pronunciation. The Nyo themselves have preserved the C1 tone probably captured by the Old Chinese final glottalized form reconstructed by Baxter. Proto-Tai would be \**hɲo* or *hɲo* C.

The first mention of the Ou in Chinese, according to Arousseau, is in the *Houai-nan tseu* (*Huainanzi*) supposedly composed in 135 BCE. This source states that sometime between the years 221 and 214 BCE, the reign of Qin Shi Huang, Chinese troops conquered the Yue country and killed Yi Hiu Song a feudal lord of the Si Ngeou [western Ou], said to designate the people of Tonkin at that time. Earlier, though perhaps less certain, is a text by Sima-Qian in the 1st century BCE, apparently citing an older text



dating from the 3rd century BCE, referring to Ngeou-Yue people who stereotypically, “cut the hair, tattoo the body, cross the arms and fasten the clothing on the left.” A later text, the *Yu-ti tche*, attributed to Kou Ye Wang dating from 510-581 CE, states that Jiaozhi was known as the country of the Lo-Yue in the period of Zhou, and under the Qin was called Western Ou (*ibid*). This implies that the term Lo predates Ou in this southern portion of Yue.

Rei (Li) does not appear in any of these nomenclatural combinations, strongly suggesting that Ou and Lo are ethnic designations specific to the Yue, imported by them into the area already inhabited by the pre-Yue Rei and Kra. And of course when Li does occur in combination it is always as Li-Lao (Rei-Kra), the more “primitive” (i.e., earlier) inhabitants.

Also not found are combinations of either Ou or Lo with Yi. One possibility is suggested indirectly by Ferlus (2006) though he associates Yi only with Tibeto-Burman as found in Yunnan and Sichuan, not considering that Yi is also a Tai designation,<sup>30</sup> that is, the Northern branch Tais in Guizhou, *Pu Yi*, the autonym of the group referred to as Nháng in Vietnam and Laos.<sup>31</sup> In pinyin the name is usually spelled Buyi or Bouyei (realized as *?ji*, *?jai*, *?joi*, or *jai* in Guizhou dialects all with the C tone) (Guoyan et al 2001), and in the literature generally as Yay (Gedney 1965), Dioi (Esquivel and Williatte 1908), and Giáy in Vietnamese. Ferlus suggests the term has undergone the typical Chinese sound shift of *l- > j-*, but this does not work for two reasons, first because the Yi (*yí*) initial consonant is originally preglottalized, and second because the tone class is C whereas the tone for Rei / Li is A.

The peopling of upper Guangxi and eastern Guizhou by the Northern branch must have been somewhat more recent, given the relative homogeneity of the Northern branch dialects, though this generalization may apply more to Guizhou than to Guangxi. In addition, parts of the Ou and Yi had pushed quite far to the south where they became known as the Yō (Nyo, Nho) and the Droi (*yuuay*), Yooy, or Yuay, both ethnonyms clearly preserving the C tone.

Tai speakers with the autonym Yi [PT \**?ii*, *?uui*, *?yay* (C Tone)] probably moved south earlier, because their name appears further south than Ou (Nyo), that is, on the southern side of the Ak escarpment and southern end of the Nakai Plateau in Khammouane Province, Laos.

Schuessler (2007) notes that the Chinese for Yi 倚 is cognate with 依 which he reconstructs as:

LH \**?iai* B (=Tai C), OCM \**?ai*?

<sup>30</sup> Actually there are three types of Yi: one has come to be identified with Tibeto-Burman *yí* 夷 [LH \**?ji*, OCM \**?lai*] (as in Ferlus); one is the Kra *yí* 羿人 referring to peoples along Sichuan-Guizhou border, and; one is the Yi (*yí*) 依 of Pu Yi with the C tone. Schuessler, citing Pulleyblank (1983), notes that *yí* 夷 has been used since the Spring and Autumn Period to refer to ‘barbarians’ living by the sea, as *yí* is the Yue word for ‘sea.’

<sup>31</sup> I am not sure of the origin of the exonym Nháng. One possibility is that it comes from the county shown as “Yang” on Schafer’s (1967) map of Nam-Viet in the Tang, located in what is now upper Guangxi, possibly the older term for the northern Tais there that are now called Zhuang (a more recent term).



Their presence in Thanh Hoá, where they are called Dươì, (the LH pronunciation), is only a memory, as recounted by Robequain (1929:110):

the Thai of the province [Red Tai] have preserved a memory of long migrations mostly from Dien Bien Phu... They did not occupy the country without violence, for they were harsh in chasing out the Dươì: they slaughtered them en masse, ensuring that these savages, very grand and peaceful, would not inhabit the valleys but the slopes of the mountains; one can still see at Muong Xia and Yen Nhan, the earthen ramparts with which they surrounded their villages, and one can still unearth in the rice fields the debris of implements which belonged to them. This eviction and these massacres were relatively recent: not longer than seven or eight generations according to the old people.

The locations mentioned are in a very remote part of the province, near the border with the Laotian province of Houa Phan, district of Xam Tay, a Red Tai speaking area on both sides of the border. It is conceivable that they were an isolated group of Reï-type people as evidenced by that group's presence in Jiuzhen and their upland swidden cultivation. If they were lowland wet rice cultivators, it is hard to envision how they were exterminated by other in-migrating Tais since a more or less symmetrical social interaction with the Yay ethnic group is found in other parts of Vietnam and Laos.<sup>32</sup> The ethnonym appears further south as *jaay* in Nghệ An, *yooy* in Khammouane, Laos (Nakai and Gnommarath), and *yuay* or *yooy* in Sakon Nakhon, Thailand (where they were transported by the Siamese military in the 19th century).

Possibly Ái [C tone], the former name for Thanh Hoá, established in CE 523 (Taylor 1983:133), was named after early Yi inhabitants.

The distribution of the Yi is thus unusual, marked by extreme separation of the Yi in Guizhou from the Dươì / Yooy in lower Thanh Hoá, far to the south and beyond. It needs to be borne in mind that the Yay (Giáy, Nhắng) found in Vietnam and Laos were relatively recent migrants from Guizhou and thus not part of a continuum (cf. Edmondson 1996).

The Ou likewise moved south where they are known as *Yô* or *Nyô* (*Nho*) starting in Thanh Hoa (Robequain 1929; Robert 1941) and extending further to Nghệ An, Khamkeut and Hinboun (Laos), Nakhon Phanom and Sakon Nakhon (Thailand). As mentioned, in Mường dialects the term for Tai is consistently *new*, indicating that the Kra-Dai group to whom they were first exposed were Nyo, original Northern Tai branch speakers who had expanded south. The consistency of this usage from Nghệ An to the northernmost point of its range near Hanoi implies that the usage came into the Mường language at a time they were relatively unified, before moving north.<sup>32</sup> The diphthong and the tone suggests the term was borrowed from a Middle Chinese (Tang period) source *\*ʔəu*, (and of course Vietnamese *Âu*),<sup>33</sup> that is, the Chinese colonists on the

<sup>32</sup> Especially around Lao Cai in Vietnam, and Phongsaly, Oudomxay, and Louang Namtha in Laos.

<sup>33</sup> Out of thirty dialects provided in Nguyễn's survey, only two had other terms; one from Vinh Phú (Thanh Sơn) in the north showed *zaj*<sup>2</sup> which comes from Giáy, a term used for the NT language (Yay or Pu Yi) that migrated into Vietnam from Guizhou about two hundred years ago (also called

coast whose main contact had been with Ou who had followed the Yi southwards. The largely independent Chinese colony of Ái had presumably organized and militarized the local Vietic peoples (Mường)<sup>34</sup> until by the 10th century they were ready to attack Jiaozhi and establish what was to become the Vietnamese nation (Taylor 1983:266ff).

Linguistically there appear to be at least two main groups of Nyo, those who developed unaspirated stops under the influence of the more numerous Tais, and those who developed aspirated stops from original voiced initials. The former are found only in Nghệ An and Thanh Hoá (author field notes).

The proximity of the Nyo to Chinese colonists or Sino-Vietnamese in the Ma and Ca basins is borne out by their unusual alphabet, lacking the distinction between the initial consonant series found in neighboring Tai alphabets. Written from top to bottom and right to left like Chinese, the alphabet has been painstakingly described by Ferlus (1993) who had access to the original papers of Henri Maspero, the source for the alphabet's details, although its existence had long been known from the works of Guignard (1912), Finot (1917), Robequain (1929), and Robert (1941). More recently a version of the Tai epic of *Cheuang* was published, written in the same Qui Chau script, claiming to be the original language, complete with phonemic transcription and translation in Vietnamese (Nhat and Ky 2005). The lack of a consonant series indicates that the alphabet was devised after the devoicing sound shift that swept over Southeast Asia and southern China, probably sometime around the 12th or the 13th century. The Nyo were thus present in southern Thanh Hoá and Nghệ An prior to that time, at a period when the Mường were more homogenized and prior to their subsequent move northward where they would have encountered only groups calling themselves Tai and not Nyo.

In Khamkeut the name Nyo has been applied to former Vietic speakers, original hunter-gatherers in the Nam Gnouang valley (Grossin 1933, Chamberlain 2014) who typically have no autonym and who began to be called Nyo, perhaps due to a prior inter-ethnic relationship and to local government insistence. Their former exonym was *Thay Kap Kè* 'gecko people' (Chamberlain 2014). Some were also called *puak* (*pu?*, *phu?*) as in footnote 19 above. Ferlus (1988) maintains that Mène and Pao are "Yo," although he does not provide any justification for this. However, both Mène and Pao, as well as the *Yo* in the Phu Qui writing sample, display certain Northern Branch features (Chamberlain 1991). The Kap Kè and the Puak until recently resided in small sub-villages attached to Mène and Pao who entered Khamkeut from Nghệ An in the late 19th century to escape the marauding of the Ho-Cheuang wars that followed the Tai-Ping rebellion in Guangxi and which affected all of the eastern portion of northern Laos, even reaching Nong Khai in Thailand (Proshan 1996), as well as Thanh Hoá and Nghệ An in Vietnam. Thus the Kap Kè and the Puak could have been labeled Nyo by local officials because of this association. There are no ethnic Lao speakers in this district which was governed by an ethnic Phong (Vietic) Chao Meuang well into the

Nhang), and another from Nghệ An (Làng Lở) which shows *taj*<sup>2</sup>, that is, Tai.

<sup>34</sup> The tone indicated - *new*<sup>1</sup> or *new*<sup>2</sup> - by Nguyễn corresponds to the A tone in Vietnamese and MC, whereas Tai languages preserve the C tone agreeing with OC \*q<sup>s</sup>(r)o<sup>?</sup> of Baxter and Sagart.

20th century. The Phong were said to be skilled intermediaries between conflicting Tai and Vietnamese systems of governance, in Nghệ An as well as Khamkeut (Macey 1906).

	<i>Mène</i>	<i>Sek</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>PT*</i>
asleep	dak	dak	-	*ʔd- DS
break (a stick)	tak DS1	rak	CT thak ~tak	*thr- DS
child	luuk DS2	luuk DS2	SW luuk DL2	*l- D
crosswise	kway B1	khway B1	Dioi kouai B1	*kh- B
dig	kut DS1	khut DS1	Dioi kout DS2-	*x-/ʏut DS
dirty	hvk DS2	-	Sui pjek Hlai re:k	-
fan	pii A2	phii A2	CSWT vii A2	*w-/b- A
fire	fii A2	vii A2	CSWT fay A2	*v- A
hurt	kɛɛt DL1	keet DL1	Sui cit DL1	-
joint	kɔɔ B1	ɣɔɔ B1	SWT kh-/xɔɔ C1	*x B/C
open	hoy A1	hay A1	SWT khay A1	*x-
pangolin	lin C4	lil C4	CSWT lin B4, Si nim B4	*l- B/C
put away, hide	kuuu C1	kuuu C1	WN kuuu C2	-
take down, remove	pɔt DS1	plet DS1	SWT pot~plot	*pl-
shoot, sprout	naaŋ A2	naaŋ A4	Yay aaŋ A4 Po-ai liŋ B1	*nr-/nl- A
mountain slope	təliŋ B1	-	Sui khiŋ, hiŋ WM ŋon A2	*hl- B
day, sun	məŋɛe A2	ɲɛn A2	PAN *wáyɪ	*ŋw- A
thunder	phɛɛ C1	phraa C1	Yay pja C1	*phr- C
who, person	pɔɔ A1/2	-	WM prau A2 SWT = A1	*pr-/br-

Note: CT = Central Tai, SW = Southwest, Si = Siamese, WN = Western Nung, WM = Wu Ming

The Nyo of Hinboun and other Mekong-adjacent portions of what is now Borikhamxay Province in Laos as well as on the Thai side in Tha Uthen, Ban Phaeng, and their environs, are decidedly different in language and culture as well as physical appearance. Likewise the Nyo of Sakon Nakhon differ from the other two Nyo groups. Thus in the cases of Yi and Ou south of the Red River delta, the original linguistic identity was lost although the ethnonym has been retained. In the case of Mène and Pao a number of distinctive substrata of Northern branch lexical items have been retained (Chamberlain 1991c). At least one peculiar item, pointed out by Ferlus (1988), was shown by Ostapirat (1998) to occur in the Be substratum of a Chinese dialect spoken on the coast west of Canton.

Mène is a language spoken in a number of villages located on a tributary of the Song Ca in central Nghệ An Province, Vietnam. Some examples of Northern Tai branch substrata are provided here as evidence of the southern penetration of the Ou peoples. Some of the etyma demonstrate shared phonological and lexical features,

while a few are relatable only to Sek and/or the other Kra-Dai families of Kam-Sui and Hlai.

### Lo, Luo (Grak, Rak, Lạc)

Lo (Lạc), in Chinese pinyin *luo*, disappeared from the more easterly portions of Annam following the invasion of Ma Yuan that ended in the year 44 CE (Taylor 1983), and thereafter only occur to the west where the ethnonym is preserved among the Tais of Sip Song Chũ Tai as the lineage name of ruling nobility.

Holm (personal communication) observes:

On the Luo Yue: this is the one Bai Yue group on which the earliest Chinese sources are at their most hazy. They provide a pedigree for all of the other Bai Yue royal houses, patrilineally of course, but do not do so for the Luo Yue. Archaeological sites linked to the Luo Yue in China are concentrated in the southern and western parts of Guangxi—in other words, those areas which are now inhabited by speakers of Southern Zhuang [Central Tai] dialects.

This scenario fits well with Luo (Lo in Tai) becoming a lineage name in Black Tai, and the name of the first ancestor of the Lao, Khun Lo, who evolved into a heavenly spirit. Their location in the Sip Song Chũ Tai lies just to the west of the Luoyue archeological sites in southwestern Guangxi.

Holm continues, calling attention to one chapter of the posthumous work of Meng Wentong (1983:82-88), on ‘Luo Yue Yu Xi Ou’ 駱越與西甌 [The Luo Yue and Western Ou]:

This chapter is devoted mainly to demonstrating that the reliable ancient sources all indicate that the Xi Ou and Luo Yue were two separate groups, rather than a single group called Ou Luo (Âu Lạc). A passage on pp. 85-86 deals specifically with the Luo Yue, and adduces evidence that their location was Jiaozhi 交趾 and Jiuzhen 九真. The location in what later became Jiaozhi is attested for the Luo Yue as early as the Zhou dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> century BCE–221 BCE), though the northern part of present-day Vietnam was not part of the Chinese empire until the Former Han period (206 BCE–24 CE). Jiaozhi and Jiuzhen were commanderies within the Chinese empire from the Han period (206 BCE–220 CE) onwards. While the boundaries of Jiaozhi and Jiuzhen as administrative units changed several times, ancient sources put the Luo Yue in the same general area down to Jin times (317–420 CE).

The Luo Yue domains are also described in early Chinese sources as contiguous with the Qin dynasty commandery of Xiangjun 象郡. [eastern Guangxi and northeastern Vietnam]

Further discussion of early Chinese sources and a summary of the archaeological evidence is found in Meng Wenying and Yueguo Shigao (2010:329-335). The distribution of Xi Ou and Luo Yue sites in Guangxi and western Guangdong [see Figure 6] is based on this source. The Xi Ou locations

in eastern Guangxi and western Guangdong are locations of archaeological sites showing Xi Ou characteristics; these are based on a report by Jiang Tingyu (2005), senior archaeologist attached to the Guangxi provincial museum (Museum of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region). The geographical distributions of these peoples found in old Chinese sources have been shown to have a fairly high degree of correlation with archaeological evidence.

Zheng Xiaolu's work (2007) shows that in the eastern regions of Guangxi and western Guangdong, the major influences on bronze artifact typology came from the Wu and Yue regions in eastern China; this influence began to show itself strongly in the late Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BCE), and continued on into the Warring States period (475-221 BCE).

By contrast, in the central and western parts of Guangxi, no clear signs of Wu and Yue influence on bronze types is found for the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods, and from the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States period only very limited types of decoration and new implements are found that show any Wu-Yue influence, and only in very small numbers (p.175). The bronze culture of this region had its own independent characteristics, beginning in the late Western Zhou period (11<sup>th</sup> century–771 BCE), which it retained well into the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods—by contrast with the areas to the east, which came under heavy influence of Wu and Yue (p.180). This Luo Yue bronze culture was different again from that of the Dian kingdom in Yunnan. (David Holm, personal communication)

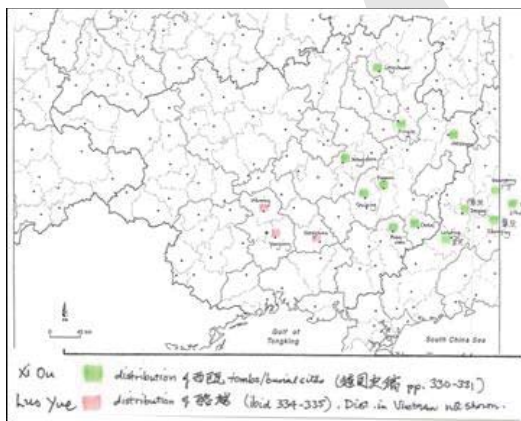


Figure 6. Lingnan. Distribution of Luo Yue (pink) and Xi Ou (green) archaeological sites. The Luo Yue are only those mentioned by Meng Wenyong (2010). Courtesy of David Holm.

According to Holm, the approximate boundary between Luo Yue and Xi Ou in Lingnan is the Liu River (see Figure 4), part of the Pearl River system (see Figure 6). It is not precisely the isogloss between Northern and Central branches of Tai as it stands today, but nevertheless is close given the 2,200 year time gap. and the general westward movements of the two Yue groups. No doubt, as he remarks, the Xi Ou, with their superior bureaucratic and military organization, easily overran the Luo Yue, and probably other Kra and Rei groups, as they pushed west to become the northern branch of Tai, and south where Yi

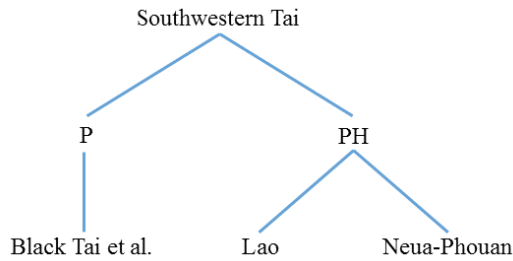
and the Ou became Yooy and Nyo respectively. The Luo Yue moved westward, starting from the Liu River, or the Xieng Commandery, which can be taken as the site of the early isogloss.

The early settlers of Xi Ou or Luo Yue must have arrived in an area already populated by Rei (Li) and at this time they both acquired the ethnonym of Tai (PCSW \*day A) and Hlai (PH \*hləy A), assuming they are cognate. This etymon does not occur in the Northern



branch. This could also mark the period when the Hlai moved to Hainan from Jiuzhen.

Aurousseau identifies the Lo with a ruling family in Min Yue and Yue Dong Hai, but provides few details.



I am not sure how or when the Lo (လဝ် *A*) lineage name dropped the final consonant.<sup>35</sup> Karlgren's Old Chinese and Middle Chinese reconstructions for 駱. 鵠. 雒 all show forms such as \*glak, kərak, kəlak or klak, clearly the name of the interdicted totemic bird of the Lo lineage *kok* 'greater hornbill', that agrees with Chinese \*kalak' 駱 'white horse with

a black mane,' and 雒 'aquatic bird,' (also 'black horse with a white mane'). These terms are thought to refer to the white-bellied sea eagle common along the south China coast. Perhaps 雒 refers to the cormorant (Chamberlain 1991d; Schuessler 2007), for which the Sino-Vietnamese word is *cọc*.<sup>36</sup>

Schuessler reconstructs simply:

OC lâk LH lak OCM \*râk

But Baxter and Sagart have:

OC [r]ʰak

It is not clear why the initial velar is omitted though Baxter's pharyngeal fricative off-glide does suggest a retracted element.

In Black Tai, we are faced with the peculiar situation of the lineage name Lo (လဝ် *A*) and the totemic bird of that lineage, the greater hornbill (*kok*), as cognates descended from the same root but by differing *routes*, (no pun intended).

Subsequent west and southwest migration, must have taken place in waves.

The PH group obviously moved south earlier, resulting in the curious, but undeniable, juxtaposition of Siamese and Neua-Phuan versus Southern Thai-Sukhothai-Lao revealed in the analysis of the tone systems.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> One possibility is the propensity of Tai-Thai languages in this area to drop final -k after long -aa-, usually though, it is replaced by a glottal stop.

<sup>36</sup> For a more complete discussion see Chamberlain (1991d). Black Tai lineages are associated with interdicted totemic animals or plants, and in some cases roles in society, such as the *Leuang* lineage who are spirit masters, and frequently are related to ancient families such as the *Kwang* (< Ghwang, Hwang) who interdict tigers (or all wild cats).

<sup>37</sup> P and PH here are just indicative labels and refer to languages where Proto-Tai voiced stops became either (PH) voiceless aspirated or (P) voiceless unaspirated (e.g. as in Thai and Tai). It has nothing to do with the pronunciation of labial fricatives *ph* and *f* etc as misunderstood by Kelly (2013). Kelly makes many mistakes in his paper due to a lack of familiarity with historical Tai linguistics. Most egregious is ignoring tone classes thus negating many of his lookalike etymologies. For example, *bô* (A tone) is unlikely to mean 'father' as it has the wrong tone, it should be *bô̌* with the B tone to correspond with Tai. Likewise my cannot mean 'mother' unless it were spelled *mỹ*.

Overall then, the picture of movements of Kra-Dai peoples and polities that emerges from the linguistic evidence available so far might look something like Figure 7.

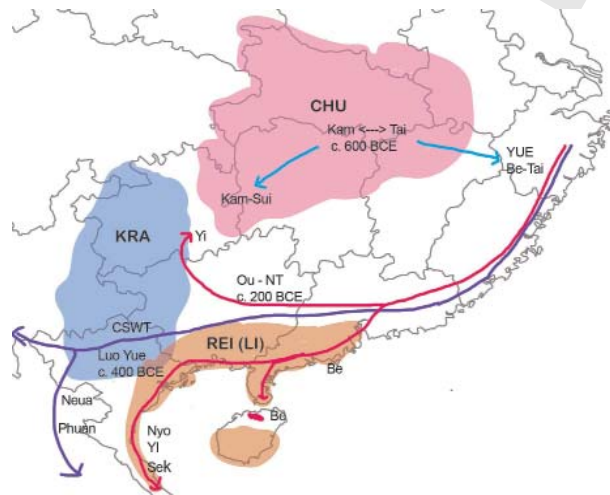


Figure 7. Map showing approximate movements of Kam-Tai and Tai peoples into spaces occupied by Kra and Rei. The dark purple line represents Luo-Yue (CSWT) and the red line Ou-Yue (NT).

### Tais of the Lao-Viet borderlands from the 10<sup>th</sup> century

The stability of Tai identities in the interior mountain valleys in the face of several hundred years of unsuccessful attempts by Vietnamese governments, beginning with *Đại Cồ Việt*, to enforce Chinese-style “civilizing” policies, demonstrates the force and extent of their presence. As John Whitmore (2000:12) puts it: “There was to be no cultural respect, ... the new Vietnamese civilization in its cosmic dimensions had to be spread to other peoples.”

The southern Zhuang’s resistance to Chinese and Vietnamese domination since the Sui and Tang periods is quite well known. The same type of conflict was found further west and southwest of the Red River, and in the basins of the Black, the Ma, the Chu and the Ca. Whitmore has carefully documented such interactions during the 14th and 15th centuries in the former provinces of Phong and Ai, which included the Tais of Sipsong Chu Tai, the Houa Phan, the Ai Lao, the Phouan, and Lao of Louang Prabang. The ethnographic map of Thanh-Hoá in Robequain (1929) is ample evidence, clearly illustrating the position of the Mường squeezed between Tais and Vietnamese. It is also a reminder that, beginning at least as early as the Spring and Autumn period, the territory of Jiaozhi was settled by Kra, Rei (Li), Luo Yue, and Xi Ou who cannot be equated ethnically with the Sinicized-Austrosiatic people we now know as the Vietnamese. In contrast to Guangdong, where sinicization of the Yue was absolute and their languages were no longer spoken, in Vietnam it was the Mường living in and around the Chinese colonial centers at the mouths of the Ca and the Ma whose languages and cultures were

On the other hand, *phụ đạo* ‘person+nobleman’ does work as both Tai and Vietnamese have the C tone for both words. The latter are native Tai words and not contact forms with Chinese.

affected, giving rise to Sinicized Mal or Mwaï (Mường) whom we now call Vietnamese.

These changes did not occur without conflicted attitudes towards sinicization. Whitmore (2000:7) describes the situation admirably:

Through the middle of the [14<sup>th</sup>] century, there was also an ideological shift in the capital, moving away from the attempt at a unified Thien Buddhist belief to one based on the Chinese Confucian Classics and seeking answers in Chinese antiquity. One aspect of the latter was the effort to draw a line between the lowland Vietnamese and other peoples – Chinese, Cham, and Lao. The Vietnamese were not to dress like the people of the north nor were they to speak like their Southeast Asian neighbors. This was a major change from the previous century (1280) when a Tran prince had sat down to eat with the Nguu-hong [Tai of Sip Song Chu Tai] and had thereby maintained peace. By the 1430s, this notion would become more formalized and more extensive, as lowland literati like Nguyen Trai and his colleagues stated the following: “We Vietnamese cannot follow the languages and clothing styles of the Chinese, the Chams, the Lao, the Siamese, or the Cambodians and thereby create chaos among our own customs.”

The various Tai languages and cultures survived intact in the interior, but gradually disappeared elsewhere, though their influence on Mường and Vietnamese agriculture and local administrative terminology remains. In fact, as Phan, cited above, has suggested, we do not really know when the Vietnamese language began to be used, especially in the north. He in fact estimates 100 or 200 years after the establishment of the new state in the 11th or 12th century.

The presence of the various Yue in Annam led to the eventual naming of the “Viet” -name in the 10th century when *Đại Cồ Việt* was formed. Precisely how this happened is not entirely clear. It can be assumed that the two main waves of Yue moving south from the original state, encountered the ancestors of the Hlai or Li (Rei) when they entered the area around Canton, and came to dominate them politically as far south as Jiuzhen and beyond. The first wave were Luo Yue, known as Lạc in Vietnamese history. They were in turn overrun by a second wave of Ou Yue or Western Ou (Xi Ou in Chinese, Âu in Vietnamese, Nyo in Tai, and Nyeo in Mường). It seems likely that the common people of the time were mostly Li (Rei) and that they were governed by Luo, and later Ou. Local people might have referred to them simply as Yue, and that is the term that ultimately prevailed. The linguistic similarity of Li and Tai would no doubt have led to a wide variety of localized multilingual relationships the depth and breadth of which can no longer be discerned.

## Conclusion

The general sequence of events might have unfolded something like this.

The ethnonym of Kra (PKD \*khra C) can be traced to the reconstructed forms for Xia (*kra?*) and Chũ (*tshra?*). The onset of the Zhou dynasty at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE coincides roughly with the establishment of the Chũ fiefdom and the

ethnolinguistic stock known as Kra-Dai (Tai-Kadai). The ancestors of the Kra family proper, resident in the southwestern portion of Chǔ, began to disperse southwards, ostensibly as a result of the upheavals surrounding the end of Shang, the beginning of Western Zhou, and the gradual rise of Chǔ into a full-fledged kingdom by the 8th century BCE. Kra peoples eventually occupied the territories that later became Guizhou, Lingnan and Annam. Further to the east, the Li or Rei (rəʔ / rəi) also separated and moved south during the Spring and Autumn Period, by an easterly yet inland route, to the areas between Canton and Jiuzhen (Thanh Hoá), as well as to Hainan island.

The groups known as Yue (*jwət*, *wat*), that is to say the Be-Tai, broke away next, in the 6th century BCE, relocating to the east on the coast around the present day province of Zhejiang, conquering the state of Wu (*ɣwâ*, *ɣwa*) shortly thereafter. Left behind in Chǔ were the ancestors of the Kam-Sui family, who seem to have remained largely in place, shifting only slightly south, not far from their current locations in Hunan, southeastern Guizhou, and northwestern Guangxi. When Chǔ conquered Yue around 333 BCE, the Yue royal families began to migrate south. First the Luo Yue wave moved into Lingnan and Annam and then westward into northeastern Laos and the Sip Song Chǔ Tai area, followed by the Xi Ou (Western Ou). The Luo Yue became the Central-Southwestern Tai, while the Xi Ou came to form the Northern Branch, including Be and Sek. These Yue and Ou overpowered and no doubt enfeoffed or otherwise absorbed the Rei and Kra in most places. Qin conquered Chǔ in 223 BCE and then Han conquered Qin. Thus began the long Sinitic colonization of southern China and Vietnam.

Jiaozhi (< *krauʔ* < Lao) would have been Kra-Rei territory. Interestingly, another name it was known by, Keo, which in Tai, became an exonym referring to Tai speaking peoples, as in the epic poem of Thao Cheuang, was only later applied to the Vietnamese.

An abbreviated timeline linking the linguistic picture to Chinese history follows:

Phase 1 – 1100-800 BCE

Shang [*lhaŋ*] ends, Zhou [*tiu*] begins, Chǔ [*tscha*] is born  
Kra (Kadai) separates from the Kra-Dai [*khra*] mainstream

Phase 2 – Early Spring and Autumn Period, 771-685 BCE

Political upheavals in Zhou causing capital to relocate  
Li [*rei*] splits off and moves south/southeast

Phase 3 – Chǔ Hegemony – Late Spring and Autumn, 613-453 BCE

King Zhuang expands Chǔ which becomes the most powerful state  
Yue [*jwət*] (Be-Tai) separates from Kam-Sui moves east to the coast, conquers Wu [*ɣwâ*]

Phase 4 – Warring States Period, 475-221 BCE

Chǔ annexes Yue, 333 BCE; Qin conquers Chǔ 223 BCE  
Yue royal families begin to move south, forming the Bai Yue  
Luo Yue [*grak jwət*] (Central Southwestern Tai) overruns the lands of the Rei and the Kra in southern Lingnan and Annam  
Xi Ou [*sei ɲəu/jəu*] (Northern Tai) follows and comes to dominate northern

Lingnan, including some areas formerly held by Luo Yue in Jiuzhen

Phase 5 – Qin (*dzin*) Dynasty 223-206 BCE; Han (*hans, xans*) Dynasty, 206 BCE – 220 CE

Qin-Han begins colonization of the south, establishing commanderies at Canton, Jiaozhi, and Jiuzhen. Recorded history of the south begins

Mobile Yue Central Southwestern Tai polities continue to establish chiefdoms, dominating the original Kra and populations in western Annam, and Rei in Jiuzhen

Ou Yue and Yi [*ʔai, ʔaiʔ*] Northern Tais push west from Nan Yue

Be and Sek [*threek*] separate and move west and south from Nan Yue, respectively

I have gone into some detail here on the eastern portion of the Kra-Dai range for two reasons. First, to demonstrate that the most likely earlier inhabitants of the lower Red River basin were Kra-Dai, whether of the Rei or the Kra variety, followed by waves of Yue beginning in the Qin-Han dynasties. But while the Yue-Tai association is acknowledged by most scholars, the pre-Yue roles and geographical locations of the Kra and Rei peoples are usually overlooked.

The second reason is to set the stage for the movement of Tais further west and southwest, beginning approximately in the 10th century, following a series of anti-Chinese uprisings in Lingnan and Annam which began in the Sui and Tang dynasties. The westward Tai (Luo-Yue) expansion was a continuation of the Yue migrations and must have happened quite rapidly given the relative lack of linguistic diversity among the Tai dialects extending from northwestern Vietnam through southern Yunnan, Laos, Thailand, Burma all the way to northeastern India. Considerable attention, historical, anthropological, and linguistic has been focused on this area, much more than on Tai groups to the east and to the north. No doubt this is due to the proximity of the Thai and Lao nations, and the presence of Tai state-like political formations such as found at Meuang Swa, Ayutthaya, Sukhothai, among the Nyouan or Lanna in northern Thailand, the Lue principality of Sip Song Panna, the Shan states in Burma, and the Ahom in Assam, all with Indic-based writing systems and extensive collections of manuscripts, grist for the historian's mill in more recent periods than we have been addressing in the eastern portions of the Kra-Dai speaking world.

### Abbreviations

AA	Austroasiatic	NT	Northern Tai
AN	Austronesian	OC	Old Chinese
CSW	Central Southwestern	OCM	Minimal Old Chinese
CSWT	Central Southwestern Tai	PAN	Proto-Austronesian
KD	Kra-Dai	PH	Proto-Hlai
KS	Kam-Sui	PKD	Proto-Kra-Dai
LH	Later Han	PKT	Proto-Kam-Tai
MC	Middle Chinese	PT	Proto-Tai
MY	Miao-Yao (Hmong-Mien)	SWT	Southwestern Tai



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# Two Scrolls Depicting Phra Phetracha's Funeral Procession in 1704 and the Riddle of their Creation

Barend J. Terwiel

In February 2015, three documents rolled up in a canister in the storerooms of the Dresden State Art Collections were identified as having originated from Siam. Two of the documents are pictorial scrolls. The larger, almost four metres long, is an ink drawing of a procession. The other is a smaller and more colourful depiction of the same scene. The third document, a three-page text in Dutch, begins: "Annotation concerning the place where the King of Siam was cremated, who had assumed the name of *pra throng than*, that means God of Wisdom, and had died on 5 February and been cremated on 26 December 1704." The king had died on 5 February 1703, according to the Ayutthaya Chronicles, and was cremated almost twenty-two months later. The illustration of the larger scroll was clearly done by an expert Siamese artist. The Dresden State Archive shows that these documents were acquired in 1716. There is, thus, no reason to doubt that these scrolls were contemporary illustrations of an actual historical event. As such, these scrolls are unique. There was no tradition in Siam of illustrating a specific royal funeral or any other historical event. No other pictorial manuscript of this age has survived from Siam with a secure provenance and dating. Why were these scrolls created? How did they come to be in Dresden? Why are there two depictions of the same event? How have they survived for three centuries, longer than any other Siamese original manuscript with a secure date? These are the questions addressed in this article. A fuller analysis of the scrolls will appear in a catalogue of the Dresden Museum's Oriental holdings, currently in preparation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reproduction of the scrolls is courtesy of the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Collection of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, Dresden State Art Collections). Photography by Maria Aranda Alonso. Photography by Maria Aranda Alonso. With special thanks to Dr. Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick and Dr. Cordula Bischoff.

## The scrolls

The lengthier scroll, filed in the Dresdner collection as number Ca 129, and here for convenience called the ‘Long Scroll’, is made of ten sheets of thin white paper, glued onto a fine linen backing. Its total length is 370.30 cm, and its height varies between 50 and 52 cm. The illustration on this long scroll represents a funeral procession moving from right to left (see Figure 1).

At the left is a courtyard enclosing an elaborate tower, clearly the *meru* for the cremation. Immediately to the right, in a forecourt, are two figures, one with arm raised in a conventional pose of pronouncing judgment. This is *Phra Yom*, Lord Yama, the God of Death, with his assistant Jettakup (Chitrakupta). Entering this forecourt is the first of a



Figure 1. The Long Scroll, courtesy: Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Foto: María Aranda Alonso

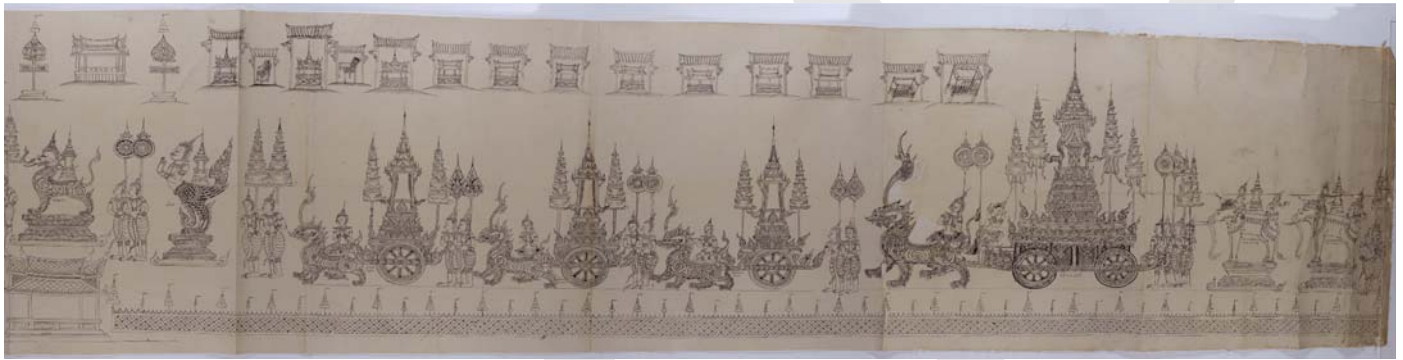
series of nine mythological animals, mounted on trolleys with disguised wheels, pulled by people in formal dress. At the upper edge of the scroll are booths or shelters, some containing seats, presumably to accommodate those watching the procession. Along the lower edge there is a row of booths for performances (dramas, puppets, dances) interspersed with towers for firework displays. Also at the lower edge are a number of acrobats. In the procession, following the mythological animals, there are three elegant carriages. Words written on the scroll in Dutch identify that these carriages are occupied respectively by the “Siamese bishop” (presumably the Buddhist patriarch), the king’s cousin and the king’s son, although their figures are invisible behind curtains. Behind these comes the impressive catafalque, a massive and very elaborate four-wheeled carriage, carrying the urn containing the king’s corpse. A single figure is shown on the front of the carriage in votive pose. Behind the catafalque are two model elephants and some people in princely attire. The whole complex scene is drawn in ink, applied with a fine pen. A golden colour has been applied to only two small parts of one mythical creature pulling a carriage.

At several places on the scroll there are neatly written words, some in Dutch, others in transcriptions from Thai, in particular identifying the mythological animals and the personages in the three carriages. On such a fine document, only an owner would add such annotations. These annotations, and the fact that there is no Thai tradition of

producing such works, suggest that this scroll was specifically commissioned with a European audience in mind.

The second scroll, filed as number Ca 128/01, and here called the 'Coloured Scroll', obviously shows the same procession, but differs in four ways (see Figure 2). First, it is smaller, measuring 215 cm in length and 42 cm in height. Second, it is drawn on four large sheets of heavy paper that have been glued onto a backing of strong cloth. Third, the scene has been simplified by omitting several elements. Fourth, it is brightly coloured. The illustrations were first drawn in pencil, then in ink, and finally coloured with various shades of green, red, yellow, orange and blue water colours. A single object, the large urn, was given a golden hue.

Distributed around this second scroll are several letters, ciphers and symbols placed



against different elements of the illustration. In the accompanying three-page text, there are eighty-five lines in Dutch explaining the pictorial elements marked by each letter, cipher or symbol. In short, this is an explanatory key to the illustration. This confirms that the scroll was intended to be seen by a European audience. Note that these letters are on the Coloured Scroll, not on the pen-and-ink Long Scroll.

### The commission

The Dutch East India Company (Dutch: Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, hereafter VOC) traded in Ayutthaya from 1608 to December 1765, leaving shortly before the fall of the city to Burmese armies.

During the year that King Phetracha died, Gideon Tant, the former *opperhoofd* (director) of the Dutch trading office, had just been replaced by Aernout Cleur, who had worked there for a number of years. In 1699, Cleur had been promoted to "*onderkoopman*" (sub-merchant) and in 1703, with his appointment as director, he was promoted to "*koopman*" (merchant).<sup>2</sup> François Valentijn thanked Cleur for copying an

<sup>2</sup> In 1708, the Thai King Suea presented Cleur with a sword and a coat (Dutch: "*houwer en rok*"); in March 1709, he was promoted to "*opperkoopman*" (chief merchant). Cleur died on 22 February



account of the death of King Narai and the rise of King Phetracha, but it is not clear when exactly this communication occurred.<sup>3</sup>

It is quite likely that Cleur commissioned the Dresden scrolls. But for what purpose? There is no direct evidence in the documentation, but there is a hint in another



Figure 2. The Coloured Scroll, courtesy: Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Foto: María Aranda Alonso

document. In early 1704, Cleur compiled a report of the succession struggles that recently had occurred in Ayutthaya, a report that has been noted by the leading historians of the period.<sup>4</sup> It arrived in Batavia on 4 May 1704, and a copy was sent to the VOC

1712. W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missieven van Gouverneurs Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Vol. 6, 1698-1713, (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publikatiën, 159), 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1976, p. 282 fn.

<sup>3</sup> See "Beknopt Verhaal van de wonderlyke verandering voorgevallen in 't Koningryk Siam, in 't jaar 1688, den Schrijver door den Heer Arnold Cleur behandigd" (François Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*, Part 3 book 6, Amsterdam and Dordrecht: Joannes and Gerard van Braam, 1726, pp. 80-87). From Valentijn's biography we may conclude that he never visited Siam, so that he must have obtained the document through correspondence. See R. R. F. Habiboe, *Tot Verheffing van mijne Natie; Het leven en werk van François Valentijn (1666-1727)*, Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Thai historian Dhiravat na Pombejra was the first to study the document and reported his findings in London during the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Thai Studies, 1993, in his "Dutch and French Evidence concerning Court Conflicts at the End of King Phetracha's Reign, c. 1699-1703". In 1998, he cautiously referred to Cleur thus: "if one is to believe a contemporary Dutch account". ("Dhiravat na Pombejra, "Princes, Pretenders, and the Chinese Phrakhleng: An Analysis of the Dutch Evidence Concerning Siamese Court Politics, 1699-1734" in Leonard Blussé and Femme Gastra (eds.) *On the Eighteenth Century as a Category of Asian History: Van Leur in Retrospect*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998, p. 107). Later, Dhiravat ventured that he was of the opinion that Cleur's letter sounded "like a Siamese account", see his *Siamese Court Life in the Seventeenth Century as Depicted in European Sources*, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2001, pp. 209-210. Bhawan Ruangsilp also referred several times to Cleur's account. See *Dutch East India Company Merchants at the Court of Ayutthaya*, Leiden: Brill 2007, p. 175 ff.



headquarters in the Netherlands. This report has not as yet been published, but since it is an essential part of the chain of deductions that follows, a translation is given here of the text as found in the Dutch Archives in The Hague.<sup>5</sup>



{Fol. 61} Account of what happened during the illness and death of the  
Siamese King named Phra Trong Than

On 23 January in the year 1703 the King did not feel well, but he did not want anyone to know. Therefore he personally ordered that the preparation of the medicines that he took should be produced in secret. Notwithstanding his attempts to keep it in the dark, his wife (the daughter of the previous King who was named PHRA NARAI<sup>6</sup>) obtained knowledge of it. She did not hesitate to caution her only son, named PHRA KHWAN,<sup>7</sup> whom she had conceived with the King [Phetracha] after being legally married. {Fol. 62} She warned him that his chance could come any day: he should desist from playing, so that when the King would die, the Chao Wangna<sup>8</sup> (who was the King's eldest son, but conceived with the daughter of a common courtier at a time when he himself was merely a courtier) would not prevent him from being crowned. Every time she mentioned this, her son (a youngster of merely ... years<sup>9</sup>) answered that his fate would be such as the Gods had decided. She was never satisfied with these answers and therefore with her son's joint knowledge, she contacted two of her most trusted servants in order to

<sup>5</sup> NA VOC 1691, fol. 61-72. A transcription of the Dutch original can be downloaded via [http://www.siam-society.org/pub\\_JSS/jss104.html](http://www.siam-society.org/pub_JSS/jss104.html)

<sup>6</sup> King Narai reigned from 1656 until 1688.

<sup>7</sup> Phra Khwan was the only child of King Phetracha and Queen Yothathep.

<sup>8</sup> Literally: 'Lord of the Front Palace'. In 1703, this important position was held by Prince Sorasak.

<sup>9</sup> The manuscript does not reveal his age. However, since Phetracha had become king on 11 July 1688, Phra Khwan must have been at most fourteen years of age.

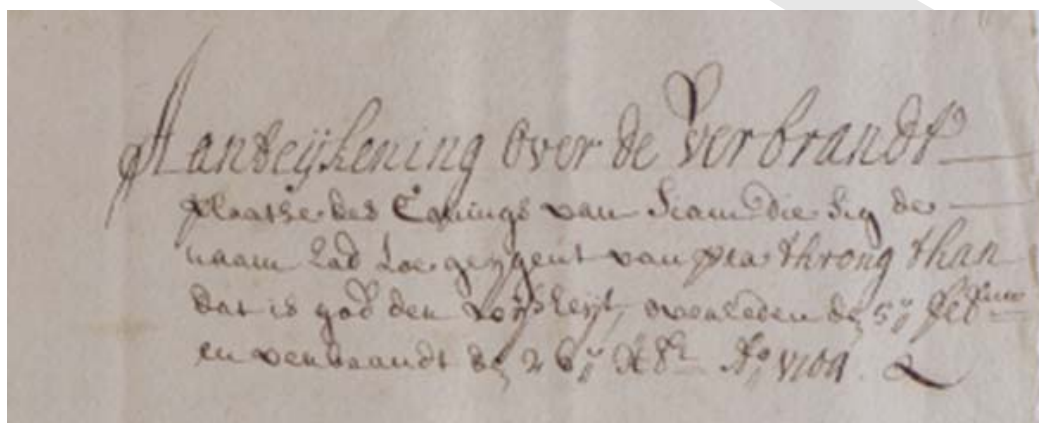


Figure 3. The heading of the legend explaining the Coloured Scroll

deliberate how, without much tumult, her son could best be assisted to occupy the throne after the death of the King. Therefore, the four of them decided to try and persuade some of the distinguished and mighty among the King's ministers to bring this about. The Queen immediately proceeded to inform many powerful men of her secret plan. The most important of these were: OKYA SOMBATTHIBAN<sup>10</sup>, PHAYA RATCHA BANGSAN, PHRA WICHAISURIYA, PHRA RAMADETCHO, PHRA SAMIANKOSET, OKLUANG THEPHARAKSA and some other mighty and less mighty courtiers, who were all much inclined to assist PHRA KHWAN. Upon hearing this, the Queen caused OKYA SOMBATTHIBAN to receive seventy catties<sup>11</sup> of silver, {Fol. 63} letting him know that if he, Sombatthiban, was of the opinion that he needed more, it would be given to him. While this conspiracy was forming, the King's illness deteriorated daily, but he did not want anyone to know, and he did not fail (in order to prevent such presumption) to preside daily in the audience hall, for at least a quarter of an hour. He continued to do so until the first day of February, when his illness advanced with a steady coughing, hiccups and an aversion to take food. However, for unknown reasons he did not wish to confide this to his eldest son, the Prince CHAO WANGNA. Whenever the Prince visited him and noticed that he was ill, he said that there was nothing wrong with him apart from coughing and hiccups and he expected to be better soon, and this reassured the Prince every time. But on the third of the month, when Prince CHAO WANGNA noticed that his father, the King, did not only get weaker, but that he no longer wished to eat or to take medicine, the Prince thought it better to remain in the King's court (even though the soothsayers had assured him that his father would get better), and to occupy it with 3000 armed men from his bodyguard. The next day, he urged his father to take food and medicine, upon which the King answered that this would not help, because he could not now escape the hour of his death, adding a bundle of sayings [such as] that even the gods had to die, and what were they [humans] compared to gods to wish to escape death. He recommended {Fol. 64} immediately his younger son, Phra Khwan, but the Prince did not answer. Therefore, the King, resuming

<sup>10</sup> Okya Sombatthiban was the Phrakhleng (the office known in Dutch writings of the time as Berquelang), Minister of Trade.

<sup>11</sup> The catty is normally a unit of weight equal to 625 grams, but when used with silver it is counted double, so that, if Cleur is to be believed, the Queen invested not less than 85 kilograms of silver.

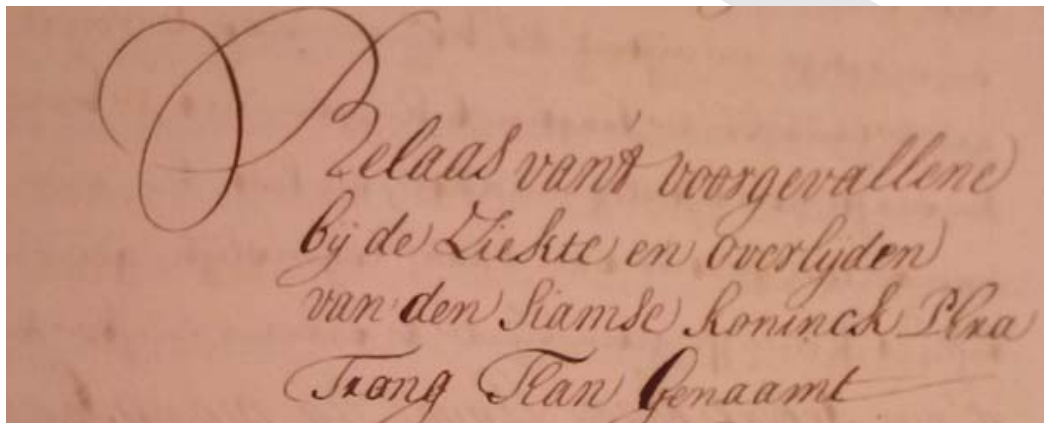


Figure 4. The heading of Aernout Cleur's account of the court intrigues in 1703

his words, added that he noticed that Phra Khwan could not expect much support from the Prince, and feared his tyranny against him [the young Prince]. Eventually, the Prince answered him with an affected laugh: "Am I a dog that I would do such a thing?" Hereupon both of them remained silent.

Later the OKYA MAHOMET prostrated himself before the Prince WANGNA and accused the OKYA SOMBATTHIBAN of not only being disinclined to appear in the meeting room of the chief courtiers, but in addition, when somebody asked him a question, of reacting in a gruff and snappish way; also, he stayed most of the time at home. His behaviour appeared most peculiar to all the chief courtiers. They could not calculate what he was planning to do, and they had come to the conclusion that he was plotting something evil. Hereupon the Prince ordered the arrest of the said OKYA, and the sealing of his house and possessions, since Sombatthiban had been entrusted with the larger part of the income of the realm.

On the fifth of the month, the King's weakness had advanced so far that in the late afternoon he could no longer speak. He died in the evening at eight o'clock. The above-mentioned Prince (wanting to keep the death of his father secret) forbade to make this public. But he noticed that such a thing was not possible, since it was whispered from ear to ear, and before midnight the whole court knew about it. Therefore, after the court's gates had been closed, following custom, and after his servants had mingled among those of the King, {Fol. 65} he caused the sign of the King's death to be given. This consisted of beating a drum and blowing fifes, which lasted the whole night. The next day he reigned as absolute King and did not forget immediately to take revenge upon OKYA SOMBATTHIBAN, against whom he had taken a grudge, by relieving him of all dignities and goods, and demanding of him a detailed account of his management. At the same time, he appointed another Chinese in his place and gave him the rank of PHRA SOMBATTHIBAN,<sup>12</sup> along with possession of all the goods, chattels and real estate of the discredited OKYA SOMBATTHIBAN.

<sup>12</sup> At that time, there were six ranks among the courtiers: *okmuen*, *okkhun*, *okluang*, *okphra*, *okya* and *okph[r]aya*, but the prefix *ok* was sometimes omitted. The deposed nobleman had held the rank of (ok)ya, his successor was appointed one category lower.

Meanwhile the previously mentioned Prince CHAO WANGNA let himself be crowned (celebrated in the Siamese way and performed by Siamese Brahmans) by a *Mae Chi*<sup>13</sup> (who was the sister of the previous deceased King, named Phra Narai, and who was also his nanny), who placed the crown on his head, and who led him by his hand to the throne and seated him upon it. Meanwhile the Phra Khwan, or Young Prince, was treated by him amicably, calling him CHAO FA NOY,<sup>14</sup> which means young King, and letting him don royal clothes and assume royal state. In addition, he declared to all ministers, whenever he appeared in the audience hall, that he coveted neither the royal throne nor the crown, and that he had accepted them only because of Phra Khwan's youth and inexperience in governing. Thus, he had been forced to accept them but certainly not {Fol. 66} with the intention of keeping them, more as an assistant of the Phra Khwan during the period that he would gain full capability to govern. He would always keep Phra Khwan at his side so that he could hear and see what happened and so rapidly make him fit for the moment when the whole government would be handed over to him. He [Sorasak] would much prefer to spend his days wandering about and playing than being burdened with the governing of a kingdom. Doubtless, this was transmitted to the Queen (the widow of the father of the present King) by her son and other favourites, but that did not satisfy her. Therefore, she looked for an opportunity the sooner the better to see her son govern without an assistant. This was the reason why she regularly asked the advice on how to reach her goal from those ministers who were in league with her. Secretly she decreed that her son's servants should stick together without consulting her, so that when a favourable opportunity occurred, her design could be executed without hindrance. She ordered all this via her son's principal servant, who also informed all the ministers who took part in the conspiracy that each should be armed with a musket and be accompanied by another two servants in *duean ha* [the fifth month], that is on the day of full moon in April, according to the Dutch calendar, when the king would be carried on his palanquin to his father's corpse in order to pay proper respect to it in accordance with local custom, {Fol. 67} [when] they would venture to shoot and kill him. And Phra Khwan would play his part with the pistols that he took with him on his horse. Therefore, during April, after demanding three good muskets and a pair of pistols from the armoury and this having been politely refused by the chief of the King's armoury, he repeated his demand, adding that he need not be afraid to hand out the required muskets, since he would within a day or two report to the King. On this condition the above-mentioned chief finally gave out the above-mentioned guns to the main servant, and Phra Khwan distributed them first to the three above-mentioned servants so that they could be used at the above-mentioned time to execute their plan.

A lady-in-waiting of the widow of the deceased King, who wanted to avenge an

<sup>13</sup> A female, clad in white robes, with shaven head, who has devoted herself to religion. This woman is known in the Thai Annals as Princess Yothathip. All the Thai annals agree that Phetracha appointed Yothathip as Queen of the right side, but apparently she refused to live with him, so he took Yothathip as his second Queen, Queen of the Left Side, who bore him a son, Phra Khwan. Annals p. 323 and p. 338.

<sup>14</sup> Younger Chaofa. The rank of Chaofa, or celestial prince, is reserved for the offspring of the King with his Queen.



insult she had received from the Queen (she had for a long period been put in chains because of her evil tongue and her habit of slandering everyone and making false accusations, and had only recently been acquitted because others had interceded for her), took cognisance of the plan and secretly revealed all to the present King. He listened carefully to her statement and found some appearance of truth. That was the reason why the King, after having given his audience, took aside the new Phrakhleng, Okya Phichit, Phaya Thainam and Okya Surasi and explained to them the case and the circumstances, and deliberated with them how to react to the situation. They decided in unison to break Phra Khwan's neck at the first favourable opportunity.

Meanwhile the King treated him [Phra Khwan] even {Fol. 68} more amicably than before, expecting nevertheless that the four who had been assigned would succeed with their attempt upon his life. Fearing that it could cause an insurrection, they were not able to move quickly. Therefore, they decided with the King to encourage Phra Khwan to ride a horse and thereby to lure him in their vicinity, so that they would easily have the opportunity to execute their plan without causing a tumult. This was the reason why the King praised Phra Khwan in his presence and during the audience with all ministers on his ability to ride a horse, and donated to him the best horse in the King's stable and encouraged him also later personally (it being a royal practise) to exercise it, and allowed him the use of the whole court [for riding].

Later on 5 April, the chief of the King's armoury let the King know about the previously mentioned guns issued from the King's armoury by the order of the young Prince Phra Khwan, upon which the King caused the above-mentioned prince to be called, and interrogated him in amicable terms why he had done so. His answer was that he wished to practise shooting. Hereupon the King reproved him, without showing any sign of suspicion or being disturbed, saying that he had acted most incorrectly when he took guns from the King's armoury without his previous knowledge, and adding also that of course there was nothing in the realm that would be refused to him when he requested it, but for the time being, he could not allow him to handle a gun (the reason being that the gunpowder could not be trusted) and then gave him the advice to leave that alone {Fol. 69} and to practice horse riding. In order to encourage him more and more, on the following day (being 6 April when the King, together with the above-mentioned young prince, would ride to their father's corpse in order to show their respect), the King did not fail to saddle for him the tamest horse, on which he galloped lustily, being encouraged by the King. Hereby the King had another chance to praise him on his boldness on a horse. Together they rode to their parent's corpse, where the young prince alighted from his horse, and after having paid proper reverence, returned on foot to the court, and stayed there the whole day without riding. During the audience in the late afternoon, the King accused him of negligence, and amicably admonished him to exercise further in horse riding. The rest of the day passed without further consequence.

But on the seventh of that month when the King came once more to their father's corpse with the above-mentioned prince, the King ordered him to gallop with the horse and to exercise. In order to please the King, the prince acceded and rode to and fro, and whenever he passed the King or came near to him, he was praised how well he controlled the horse. This gave the prince the courage to ride as far as the Wisit warehouse. There



the four earlier mentioned ministers with an affected slyness went to him, giving him the message that he should quickly dismount, in order to go to the King who expected him. Therefore, innocently, he immediately {Fol. 70} alighted from his horse. The Phrakhlāng first grabbed him and held him by his arm and then the three other chief courtiers surrounded him. They brought him into a nearby bricked-in square. There the executioner, who had been especially appointed for this task, suddenly appeared with a sandalwood club in his hand. Seeing this, the prince was startled and when he asked the Phrakhlāng whether he was going to die, he announced that he had received orders to do so from the King and it was his bounden duty to execute the King's command. Then, finally, the prince told the Phrakhlāng (realising that this time he would not escape death) that he could not bear to be beaten to death with such a club and asked to lose his head by the sword. The Phrakhlāng announced that it would depart from time-honoured custom to shed royal blood by the sword. After that, he received finally the deadly stroke on his neck and remained immobile. Subsequently, the body was placed in a white sack, laid on the mutilation bench, and all his limbs were beaten to pieces and crushed. After this had been done he was taken from the mutilation bench and laid in a copper bowl. Once done, the King was quickly informed, who straight away ordered the arrest of the most private servants of the prince, and especially his first page, in order to question him whether or not he had known of Phra Khwan's secret decision. This was accomplished so fast that the {Fol. 71} amazement that he experienced through seeing his master beaten to death still gripped him, and he immediately confessed all without being tortured. At the same time, he delivered a list of those who had been in league with Phra Khwan, causing the King to keep a sharp watch in the palace. The dead body of the prince was displayed until ten o'clock the next morning, after which it was brought to Wat Khok Phraya,<sup>15</sup> where it was buried, and over the grave's opening heavy beams were laid in order to prevent it from being exhumed and to forestall the spreading of false rumours among the populace (as had occurred after the demise of King Pra Trong Than) that he had escaped death and was kept concealed somewhere else.

The King's widow, having heard the news of her son Phra Khwan's death, immediately left her court and in consternation fled to her aunt, the above-mentioned *Mae chi*, and asked to be protected. Hereupon she took time to accuse her of having secretly lived with her husband, the recently deceased King Pra Trong Than (before being married to him), and thus causing the death of the two legal princes in Lopburi, who had met with the same fate as had now befallen her son; thus the gods, who avenge all injustices, allowed this to happen to her. However, after having reproached her, the *Mae chi* took her under her protection and she had so much claim on the king (who was indebted to her for his rise because she had brought him up and {Fol. 72} elevated him) that she stayed alive and escaped corporal punishment, suffering only the confiscation of all her goods and chattels and the loss of the queenly dignity. This did not happen to most of the chief courtiers who were involved in the above-mentioned plot. With the

<sup>15</sup> วัดโคกพระยา. The text gives Trookpia. However, the Khok Phraya monastery has traditionally been used to execute persons of royal blood. [http://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Temples\\_Ruins\\_KhokPhraya.html](http://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Temples_Ruins_KhokPhraya.html). I thank Chris Baker for pointing out this impressive research tool.

exception of the son of the most praiseworthy Okya Phonlathep<sup>16</sup> (who was pardoned because of his father's meritoriousness through the intercession of the King's mother and the above-mentioned *Mae chi*), on the 3rd of May they did not only lose their lives by being shot and hung with hooks through their breasts (having already been exposed for three days and having received scorn from passers-by who hit their heads and bodies with their elbows), but in addition had their bodies bound in bamboo, to allow birds to get at them. Thus, they were exposed in front of the tribunal and the city gates as an example, and their wives and children and a large part of their relatives were donated to live with other servants of the King. Thus, the King stayed on, confirmed in his governing, without having to fear anybody.

All the above-mentioned has been related from the statement of a trusted courtier and from notes made by myself. Therefore, the undersigned does not hold himself responsible for mistakes in this [story], whether in the mentioned dates or otherwise, that may have been committed without his knowledge.

Signed: Arnout Cleur

### Fact or fiction?

This is an exciting story! King Phetracha is fatally ill; Queen Yothathip is plotting to put her son on the throne; Sorasak moves quickly, sending his troops to stage a coup and managing to be anointed as the new king; soon after, he discovers Yothathip is planning a counter-strike; Sorasak deceives his half-brother Phra Khwan, lulling him into believing that he is still the rightful heir to the throne while at the same time preparing to execute him; Phra Khwan is ritually executed and most of the courtiers, who had conspired with him, meet a gruesome death.

However, Cleur's account of the events of 1703-4 cannot be accepted without scrutiny. While some events may have been based upon information from his "trusted courtier", as Cleur claims at the end of the report, Cleur must have freely embroidered upon them. No courtier would have had the opportunity to listen to the private conversations between the ailing King Phetracha and his eldest son, Sorasak. Even less likely could he have known of the dangerous, secret deliberations between Queen Yothathip and Okya Sombatthiban. Cleur believes that Sorasak, after having been crowned (by Queen Yothathep of all people!), made pronouncements in the audience hall about not wanting to be king and preferring to roam about in the kingdom. These do not sound like utterances of a Thai king: roaming about is rather a European's dream of a leisurely existence, not that of a Siamese nobleman. The conversations between the usurper and Phra Khwan also appear extremely fanciful. Moreover, Cleur's putative informant could not possibly have been privy to what a vindictive lady-in-waiting in strict secrecy revealed to the new king. The elaborate, cumbersome way chosen by Sorasak to lure Phra Khwan into the hands of his murderers does not accord with the

<sup>16</sup> This is the title of the Head of the *Krom Na*, the Ministry of Lands, a post to which the former Okya Phiphatkosa had recently been appointed. See Bhawan Ruangsilp, *Dutch East India Company, Merchants at the Court of Ayutthaya*, p. 175.

behaviour of a wilful Siamese king who, after all, wields absolute power. Neither does Phra Khwan's pleading to be beheaded ring true; this seems rather to be the author's ploy to explain to his audience the exotic custom of executing members of the royal family by hitting them with a sandalwood club.

There is good reason to believe that most of what is written in Cleur's account did not happen that way. The Ayutthaya Chronicles are quite clear as to the sequence of events. They state that, as soon as he realised that his father was dying, Phetracha's eldest son, *Luang Sorasak*, caused the killing of both rivals, Prince Trat Noi (the son of Queen Yothathep) and Phra Khwan (Queen Yothathip's son).<sup>17</sup> Apparently, King Phetracha was deeply shocked when he learnt of these killings and, on his deathbed, nominated his nephew, Prince Phichai Surin, to be his successor. The latter, realising he would be unable to survive a confrontation with the powerful *Luang Sorasak*, refused the throne.<sup>18</sup>

A comparison between the forthright account of Sorasak's misdeeds prior to being accepted as the new monarch in The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya and Cleur's version of what happened shows not only that the two versions are incompatible, but that the latter is unconvincing. Cleur's long relation of plots and counter-plots is shown to be a fanciful, farfetched story, a garbled mixture of gossip and fantasy. With a good measure of leniency, it may be called an artistic creation, for Cleur did not take the trouble to find out what actually had happened. Having learnt of a dramatic succession whereby a young prince was killed, he wove a story that would excite the Dutch public. It might be used as a libretto for an opera, but should not be used as a reliable source for what really happened during 1703 in Ayutthaya. It may be seen as part of a genre that became popular at the time, revelling in depicting the cruelty of an Oriental court, where nobody could be certain of his life and where apparently morality was at a low ebb.<sup>19</sup> What gave Cleur the idea of compiling this fantastic account?

### Cleur's inspiration?

Cleur was not the first chief of the Dutch trading station to present an account of political turbulence in the Siamese court, caused by the demise of the ruling monarch. On the final day of the year 1640, Jeremias van Vliet submitted his *Historiael Verhael der Sieckte ende Doot van Phra Interra-Tsia 22en Coninck in Siam...*, which has recently been translated by Alfons van der Kraan as "Historical Account of the Illness and Death

<sup>17</sup> Richard Cushman, *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, Bangkok: Siam Society, 2000, pp. 367-368.

<sup>18</sup> Cushman, *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, pp. 377-378.

<sup>19</sup> In Europe, there was a keen interest in lurid and violent accounts of happenings in Oriental courts. This explains the remarkable success of the novel called *Asiatische Banice, or blutiges doch mutiges Pegu* [Asian Banice, or bloody but brave Pegu] by Heinrich Anselm von Zigler, originally written in 1689 and reprinted ten times in the 18th century. Von Zigler was inspired by Erasmus Francisci, who recounted the voyage of Fernão Mendes Pinto (1668). Another example is the play written by "a Young Lady" [probably a pen-name of Elkanah Settle], entitled *The Unnatural Mother; The Scene in the Kingdom of Siam* (London, 1698), featuring the theme of incest, a poisoning and several fatal stabbings.

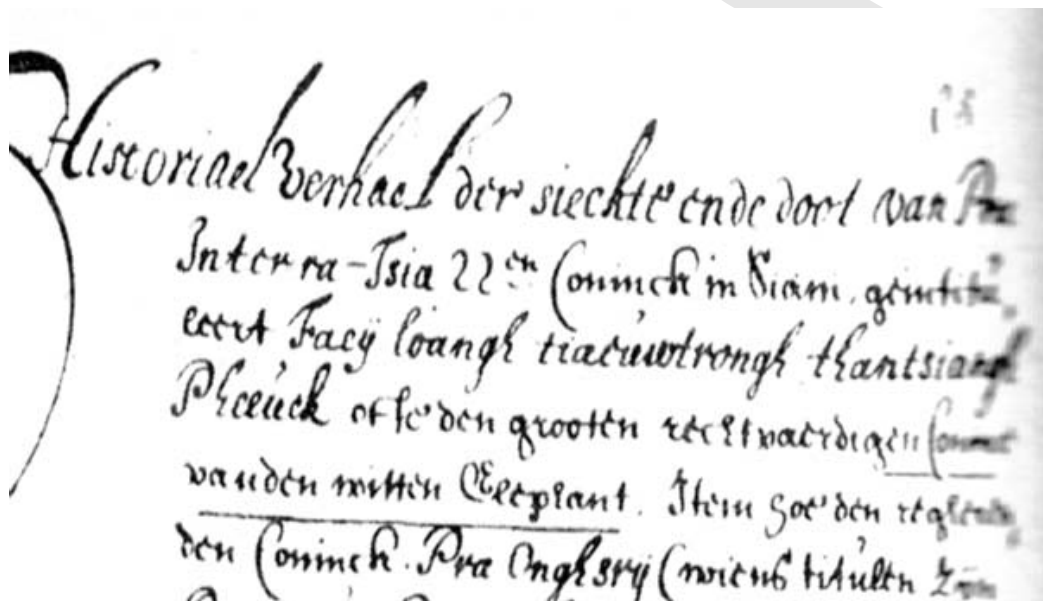


Figure 5. The heading of Jeremias van Vliet's *Historiael Verhael* on the sickness and death of Pra Intharacha, 22<sup>nd</sup> King of Siam, entitled Failuang chao trong than chang phueak, [อินทราชา... ฝ่ายหลวงเจ้าทรงธรรมช้างเผือก] meaning The Great Just King of the White Elephant...

of Phra Intharacha-Tsia, 22<sup>nd</sup> King of Siam...”<sup>20</sup>

Van Vliet tells a dramatic story about the death of King Intharacha (in modern texts called King Songtham), and about Okya Si Worawong, who murdered the royal family and usurped the throne with the assistance of a troop of Japanese mercenaries. In their introduction to the new edition of van Vliet's text, Dhiravat na Pombejra and Chris Baker have pointed out that his *Historiael Verhael* was written “as a tragedy in the dramatic tradition of his era”.<sup>21</sup> Cleur's account deserves the same description. Both documents describe the chilling situation after the death of the Siamese king when several candidates aspired to occupy the throne, leading to a spate of murders. There are two indications that the similarity between the two accounts was not a matter of chance, but resulted from Cleur's knowledge of van Vliet's *Historical Account*.

First, when van Vliet writes of the king who died in 1628, he commences his title with the words “Facij loangh tiaeuw trongh than” (see Figure 5), meaning the Siamese words ฝ่ายหลวงเจ้าทรงธรรม, *fai luang chao Trong Tham*.<sup>22</sup> Seventy-five years later, Cleur

<sup>20</sup> Published in Chris Baker et al., *Van Vliet's Siam*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005, pp. 245-322. In this article I have deliberately changed the spacing to show that one of the titles that van Vliet gave to the king, whose death in 1628 he describes, is a Dutch rendering of Phra Trong Tham, for Cleur uses the same title for Phetracha.

<sup>21</sup> Baker, *Van Vliet's Siam*, p. 250.

<sup>22</sup> Here it should be noted that most probably throughout the 17th century the pronunciation of the “royal word” ทรง actually was in accordance with its Cambodian origin “trong” (in modern Siamese the pronunciation is “song”). That is why Simon de La Loubère, in a list of Siamese musical instruments, mentions the three-stringed violin “trô”, an instrument that all Thais now pronounce “so”. That is also why the Thai word for “eagle” on the Long Scroll is written “intri”, and in another Dutch rendering of the name of the Thai king (also in 1704) the expression “trong pra caruna prot clau prot cramom...” [being the proper way to address the Thai king] . (ทรงพระกรุณา



uses exactly the same title of *Phra Trong Than* to refer to King Phetracha. Nowhere else is this title used for King Phetracha.

Second, when van Vliet wrote his account in 1640, he made a minor mistake by rendering “tham” (Thai: ธรรม) as “than”. Cleur makes the same mistake four times in a row, three times in the letter of 1704 (see Figure 6) and once more in the explanatory text to the Coloured Scroll (see Figure 4, where he wrote the name as *pra throng than*).

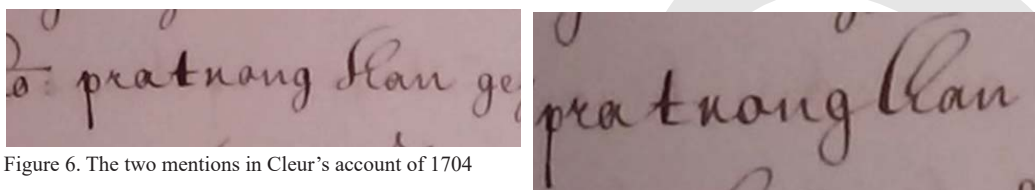


Figure 6. The two mentions in Cleur's account of 1704

### A possible chain of events

Shortly after being promoted as chief of the Dutch trading office in Siam, Cleur was informed by someone he calls “a trusted courtier” about the death of King Phetracha and about conspiracies and killings occasioned by the succession. Cleur was aware that similar turmoil had occurred in the past and that in 1640, Jeremias van Vliet had written the *Historiael Verhael*, describing the cunning way in which Okya Si Worawong wiped out the royal family and usurped the throne. After leaving Ayutthaya in 1641, van Vliet served as ambassador to Palembang, as Governor of Malacca and even as a member of the Extraordinary Council of the VOC in Batavia. Arriving safely back in the Netherlands in 1647, van Vliet lived as a rich and honoured burgher until his demise. To his successors, van Vliet must have seemed a shining example of what a merchant in the VOC could achieve.

The fact that van Vliet's career was partly built upon his extensive writings on Siam, including an account of bloody succession in 1628, may well have been Cleur's inspiration to emulate him. Early in 1704, Cleur sent to Batavia his version of the intrigues surrounding the death of King Phetracha, as presented in the translation above. Even though he is quite verbose in his account, he managed to fill relatively few pages compared to van Vliet's earlier account.

Eight months after Cleur had despatched his dramatic account, King Phetracha's funeral took place. For Cleur, wishing to continue to impress his superiors, it must have seemed like another gift from heaven, for hitherto no Dutchman had written on the subject. If he attended and witnessed the procession, he may well have been somewhat bewildered by the manifold activities and unusual ritual pageantry. Thousands of participants filed past, including Buddhist monks, courtiers, and functionaries carrying regalia. A large number of soldiers pulled unwieldy vehicles. There were horsemen,

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โปรดเกล้าโปรดกระหม่อม)”, signed by Dirk de Haas, points in the same direction (NA 1.04.02.1691 fol. 76) and in numerous documents the Thai interpreter for the Dutch trading office is called Trongphanit (Thai: ทรงพาณิชย์).



musicians and dancers. Behind the royal corpse a group of ladies wept and wailed.<sup>23</sup>

Such a scene would have been very difficult for a Dutch merchant to render into a piece of prose or to convert into a picture. This must have been the moment that Cleur decided to ask a Thai artist to make a drawing of the funeral procession which, when put together with his account of the intrigues surrounding King Phetracha's death, would form a small booklet, or at least a pamphlet that would interest a wider public in the Netherlands.

The result is the Long Scroll. When it was finished and delivered at the Dutch trading office, the artist explained the chief elements that he had drawn and his explanations were carefully written on the scroll. It may be assumed that the fifteen separate explanatory entries on the Long Scroll are in Cleur's own handwriting.

However, Cleur seems to have come to the conclusion that the Long Scroll would not suit his purpose of illustrating a publication designed to excite European readers. It was too big. Its content was too complicated and difficult to understand. The materials were too frail. It was dull in black and white, and an experiment to add colour was perhaps abandoned (hence only two small parts are coloured on the Long Scroll). The use of perspective did not conform to European conventions. Also, the fourfold shift of the point of view in the depiction of the galleries surrounding Mount Meru must have been difficult to decipher for a person unfamiliar with Thai ritual.



Figure 7. Detail of a Ravana's funeral procession depicted in Panel 113, the Monastery of the Emerald Buddha, Bangkok, Photograph by Pattaratorn Chirapravati

These, it is here submitted, could be some of the reasons why Cleur ordered somebody in the lodge (if he lacked the skills to do it himself) to draw a different version—smaller, stronger, simpler, more colourful. A golden tower, a smaller number of mythological animals and a single, simple chariot with the king's urn made for a nice colourful and attractive illustration. When it was almost finished, Cleur must have contacted a knowledgeable Thai to explain all details of the simplified scroll. These

<sup>23</sup> Cushman, *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, p. 369.

explanations were carefully noted, the appropriate ciphers and letters were entered on the Coloured Scroll and the three pages of explanatory text were composed as a legend.

*The finale*

But this project was never brought to fruition. Cleur died in Ayutthaya on 22 February 1712. His possessions must have been shipped to Amsterdam, where Egidius van den Bempden, one of the Directors of the VOC, apparently acquired the container with both scrolls and the three-page legend. In 1716, van den Bempden sold the three documents to an agent of Augustus Frederick, Prince-Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (also known as Augustus the Strong), a prodigious collector of artefacts and art objects from all over the world. Labelled as containing Chinese paintings, the canister remained in storage, safe from sunlight, moisture, and insects, for three centuries. In 1918, the collection of Augustus the Strong and other kings of Saxony became part of the Dresden State Art Collections, housed in the king's former castle. As part of a project to catalogue the Oriental artefacts, the contents of the canister were examined, the "Chinese paintings" were discovered to be something rather different, and a professor reputed to know something about Siam was invited to travel from Berlin to explain the meaning of the procession that was depicted on the two scrolls. As a result of this fortuitous history, we can now see the contemporary workmanship of the Long Scroll and the fantasy of the Coloured Scroll, just as they were when made more than three hundred years ago.

# Disappointing Gifts: Dialectics of Gift Exchange in Early Modern European-East Asian Diplomatic Practice

Andrew Turton

Some sort of gift exchange has been part of every recorded instance of diplomatic encounters between countries in Asia and Europe. Ceremonies for the reception of presents in tribute embassies were the only substantial elements of pre-Han diplomacy incorporated into Tang dynasty and later practice (Wills 1984: 6). Such exchanges rank in importance only behind the primary exchange of oral, or more usually written, messages between rulers. By definition here, a 'diplomatic encounter' is one between rulers, in which one is represented by a travelling envoy to the other, whether the rulers are sovereign and in principle equal (as in Europe after the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, and more so after 1815) or, as in the majority of Asian cases, between rulers at various levels of more and less inclusive hierarchies. The embassy is frequently reciprocated by a return visit, although never by the Chinese until the late 19th century. Diplomatic exchanges are instances of long-distance giving across, and leapfrogging borders, seas and oceans. They transcend and constitute cultural and political differences. They create, maintain and distribute mutual knowledge and ignorance. We are dealing with historical states and empires. We therefore have a high degree of complexity, hierarchy and literacy (see also Turton 1997 and 2001).

This essay reflects on the concerns and perspectives of my book, with Volker Grabowsky (2003), *The gold and silver road of trade and friendship: the McLeod and Richardson diplomatic missions to Tai states in 1837*, and draws more or less implicitly on a number of theoretical perspectives. My empirical field of interest, and chief source of ethnographic (or 'implicit ethnographic', see Schwartz 1995) data, is European diplomatic *contacts* with Southeast Asian states and to some extent with China (and Chinese relations with Southeast Asian states) from the early 16th and, in particular, the mid-19th centuries. My particular focus is on British relations with the Siamese and other Tai states. Within this extended period, European diplomatic practices changed from late feudal/absolutist monarchies, through mercantilism and early colonialism to the ideas of sovereign national states and early forms of imperialism.

There is considerable first-hand written evidence of diplomatic gift exchange. Second-hand commentaries are also abundant. Synthesis and comparative analysis are rare, however. The hegemony of Chinese imperial practices on the one hand, and on the other, the relatively consistent European modes of diplomatic conduct, permit a certain amount of longitudinal comparison. This is the more permissible and effective, the more focused the comparison is on particular times and locations. Hence the main focus is on a sequence of episodes in Anglo-Siamese relations between 1822 and 1857.

I chose the title, 'Disappointing gifts', in order to reflect on the assessment of gifts by either, or both, parties to a diplomatic exchange and on the success or failure of such exchanges within power laden contexts. I had in mind partly some English colloquialisms concerning gift giving, such as: 'Oh, well, it's the thought that counts'; 'one man's meat is another man's poison'; and the translingual Anglo-German pun, 'one man's *Gift* is another man's poison'. My other source of inspiration is an episode from one of the Pooh Bear stories of A. A. Milne (Milne 1973). These children's stories may be unfamiliar to some readers, but I shall not elaborate here except to say that the episode concerns two well-intended gifts from a small bear and a piglet to their sceptical and lugubrious friend, a donkey. The gifts are almost totally consumed or destroyed before they reach their destination, but the remnants are eventually handed over and somehow things end up satisfactorily enough. The story is used brilliantly by Benjamin Hoff to illustrate the Chinese concept of *wu wei* (which he transforms into 'Pooh Way') within Taoist thought, in his book *The Tao of Pooh* (Hoff 1982). Taoist ideas are very pertinent to Chinese and related East Asian diplomatic practices. Hoff's insight is therefore highly suggestive for considering diplomatic gifts and the notion of 'disappointing gifts'.

I offer two strongly contrasting examples as a way of thinking about this. One is the well known Macartney mission to the Qianlong Emperor in 1793 – a home win for the Chinese – and the Bowring mission to Siam in 1855 – an away win for the English, or a high score draw, depending on how you view it. First, I wish to make a rather wide-ranging introduction to the topic of 'diplomatic gift giving'.

### To all and singular to whom these presents shall come

By definition, a diplomatic mission, a *mobile* embassy in ancient and early modern times, is an exchange, and probably part of a wider bilateral sequence of exchange. And the whole of it is a kind of exchange. Of course, there are limiting cases of embassies being turned back at the frontier or being refused an audience at the capital. Lord Amherst left Peking (Beijing) the same day he arrived in 1816, although the Chinese kept at least some of his gifts. In Asia, there are numerous instances of ambassadors being killed, despite a fairly widespread convention of immunity for heralds and envoys, or potential exchange partners, as the Trobrianders found even among headhunting Dobuans (as cited by Mauss 1950: 278). The older embassies did not, however, benefit from the greater certainties of today's rules of sovereignty and immunity concerning resident embassies. So their status was always precarious and negotiable. Any part and all of the embassy was part of an exchange in which mutual ignorance, fear, and suspicion had to be limited or overcome with dialogue, sharing of information, offering tokens of respect, honour, dignity, offerings of substantive worth and value, and promises of future conduct. The status of the embassy was of primary importance, notably whether it was directly sent by, and bearing a letter from, a ruler and with what delegated powers. The size, rank and composition of the embassy, their mode of transport, their dress, comportment, language skills and weapons were among key variables to be displayed and assessed. Similar details of the reception of the visiting embassy were likewise noted. The personal behaviour of the ambassador constituted a large area for manoeuvre. On



the whole, we find the English selecting as ambassadors those with an affable, mild and conciliatory manner, for all that they should also be experienced negotiators and firm in their dealings, and so on. The gifts constituted another area for endless orchestration.

In this article I try to focus mainly on the chief gifts between rulers. In a sense, the highest gift, the most honoured by the recipient and the most lavishly wrapped and so on, was the royal or imperial letter. But this was always accompanied by what I dare call gifts in the most obvious sense: portable (even if cumbersome, such as cannon) or 'self-mobile' (e.g. horses) objects. They are multiple, divisible, mostly durable, but some also more immediately consumable. Royal gifts usually contained at least some objects, or materials of the highest possible value, such as: gold, silver, diamonds, other precious stones, crystal and jewellery, ivory, rhinoceros horn, animal skins and furs, silk, elephants, horses, imagery, weapons, scientific instruments, etc. In earlier epochs, and in personal return gifts to members of missions, such high value and relatively long-lasting consumables as honey, wine, dried meat and so on, figure more.

There was an assumption that royal gifts would consist of objects originating in the sending country. The Chinese term *gong*, Hevia (1993) notes, is usually translated as 'tribute', but may be glossed as *fangwu*, local products, implying a movement from periphery to centre rather than from one centre to another. Echoing the Chinese protocol, the Siamese resented the American envoy, Joseph Balestier, in 1850, who was guilty in their eyes of many others breaches, bringing them objects which had clearly been bought in Hong Kong on the way. He was denied an audience. The English were aware of this expectation, although Arthur Phayre, at the Burmese court in 1855, records Burmese puzzlement at 'two fine gold-wrought suits of Hindustanee mail, plate and chain', pointing out that 'they knew it was not English practice to wear them'. Of course the gifts were likely to include items that were even more unfamiliar, if 'local' to the sending country:

"A splendid silver centre vase, or wine cooler, was set down in their list as a spittoon, to which constant concomitant of their own dignitaries it bore a nearer resemblance than to aught else in their cognisance" (Yule 1858, original emphasis).

There are many related topics with which this article cannot deal, but which might usefully be brought to mind for future discussion. One is further consideration of what was not permissible as a gift. One potential item, which I have found in no East Asian exchange, is slaves. Perhaps the most important criterion for determining what may not be given might be that of strategic value. But, nonetheless, almost any item one can think of – excepting manpower – may be given, at least in token amounts: elephants, weapons, scientific instruments, maps and itineraries, texts of chronicles and dynastic lists, and so on. These are tantalising instruments of potential espionage and aggression. Sometimes they are given, sometimes withheld, sometimes requested and denied. McLeod asks for some manuscripts at Chiang Rung and is met with a rhetorical answer as to 'whether I [McLeod] wished he [the Tai official] should lose his head' (Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 397).

The question of weapons as gifts is intriguing. They are about as constant in gift



presentation from Europeans as tea is from the Emperor of China. They are, of course, items of rank, of beauty, endlessly added value, capable of bearing most other valuable materials (on scabbards and the like), signs of superior technology, and naturally a good advertisement for the commercial trade of arms. Sometimes substantial gifts of weapons are given (say hundreds of muskets) or a few choice items (multi-barrelled and multi-shot guns). But the Asian courts also sent weapons. The Siamese sent weapons as gifts in at least two of their 17th century missions to Europe: to Holland in 1608, they sent two arquebuses (elephant guns), two swords, two spears and two pikes; and they sent cannon to Louis XIV.

In classic Maussian terms, there was an absolute '*obligation to give*' such gifts. The English East India Company sent traders to Siam in the late 17th century without royal letters or gifts – despite earlier conformity when King James I had sent a letter and gifts to 'his brother the King of Siam'. The Dutch warned and advised the English otherwise. And of course it was not just royal gifts. Gifts went all the way up, as they came all the way down. Gifts were required at many levels of the local hierarchy, whether these could be described as opening gifts, sweeteners, bribes, customs/customary dues, extortion or whatever. There might also be direct payments for services in cash, by the visitors.

Return gifts to the sending ruler tended to be calculated at the end of the mission, when some sort of compromise could be made between reciprocating equivalent value – or perhaps more or less according to the assessment of the success or value of the mission. Return gifts to members of the embassy feature even larger in accounts. The Chinese had two clear categories of 'bestowal' (*ci*) and 'reward' (*shang*). These were calculated, as were all gifts we are discussing, in terms of hierarchies of rank and value.

If we deduct the cost of transporting an embassy to and from its destination, the cost of any particular embassy might be approximately the same for either side. A foreign embassy was usually attended by resident nationals of other countries, and by simultaneously visiting embassies. This gave an added value for the host country. The display was a public relations coup, in modern terms. The cost of holding large banquets and entertainments could be enormous. In terms of the gifts themselves, the Siamese, at least, had a clear sense that this was a question of fairly strictly balanced value (Thailand 1936).

It was an Asian practice to provide for the subsistence of a visiting embassy. They were guests in a sense. The Thai term *khaek muang* (guests of the state), used in records of foreign missions, illustrates this. It echoes the Chinese *bin li*. In the Siamese case this took various forms. At every moment of this giving, which is itself a kind of, or part of a 'gift exchange', there were opportunities for manipulation. On arrival, even before landing, ships were presented with fruit, sugar and tea. The port governor – who had the most exceptional experience of foreign visitors – could entertain foreign guests using Western furniture, table settings, wine and cuisine, which were not always available further upstream. As the mission progressed, there would be additional supplies of this kind, including live animals for meat, and later, for the Americans especially, milk and coffee.

In part, according to particular assessments of missions, and later as a general trend, the Siamese offered increasing benefits to foreign missions, from details such as quality,

type and dimension of beds, bedding, mosquito nets, etc., to the number of out-of-town excursions. Form of transport was an important sumptuary variable. John Crawford, the British envoy to Siam in 1822, was understandably offended by being offered only a soft hammock carried by two people as his main means of diplomatic carriage – it was probably hard to maintain European standards of high dignity in such a mode. Later envoys had a litter carried by eight people. The English requirements, as interpreted by the Siamese, set the style for a series of Western missions after 1855. Other offerings, or concessions, on the Siamese part, included dressing the Siamese military, rowers and officials in shirts and trousers – to obviate foreigners' charges of 'nakedness' – cleaning and clearing the streets to be passed by the embassy, and so on.

I have mentioned some forms of hospitality as parts of the entire exchange process. This could be an area of some calculation and manipulation in the case of problematic embassies. The Siamese, again probably echoing Chinese practice, expected to have to bear the subsistence costs of the visiting embassy. They were usually generous in their supply of tea, sugar, fruit, livestock and other basic requirements. The Siamese system of farming out produce tax worked well for them here, as the King merely ordered local concessionaires – usually Thai-Chinese tax farmers who held concessions for various products – to furnish what was necessary. The visitors seem to have welcomed and appreciated this. What was seldom welcome, however, was the royal gift of money, or silver, for subsistence expenses (*phrarajathan bialiang*, or in ordinary Thai also used in the official Siamese account, *kka kap khao khong kin*). This was couched in the same terms as funds provided for senior Siamese officials: 240 *ticals* per month, though in Henry Burney's case the Vice-Roy added a further 120 *ticals* 'as we lived so much upon animal food' (Burney 1910-14, Vol. 1: 48). But even so, Burney says this practice was 'unpleasant to European feeling'. However, it is noted that in the first Siamese mission to Europe (Holland in 1608), the Dutch gave them 100 guilders for travel expenses. The British, seem to have resented this especially. This was partly, I think, because it put them under a more obvious form of obligation and dependency; also because it was in cash, and not a very large amount in their eyes in any case. It was frequently referred to as 'bazaar expenses', and attempts were made to refuse or return it. A somewhat similar, but in a way inverted, version of this was when a large present such as a horse or elephant was offered, in which case some attempt might be made to offer a modest or token sum in (part) payment. These are examples of a limit to the '*obligation to receive*'.

For the most part, foreign envoys were required to, and did, accept all gifts. The local ruler's gifts were held in such esteem by some ambassadors from Asian countries that they bore them on their heads, even when moving on all fours. The Siamese Ambassadors to London in 1857 approached Queen Victoria, in her audience hall at Windsor, 'in a position between crouching and crawling', as the press put it, while pushing the gifts in front of them on gilt trays. It was customary for recipients of royal gifts to wear garments, if these were among the gifts, or otherwise bring to court and display personal objects received in order to bring honour to the donor. McLeod happily put on a long Chinese robe and necklace of office at the Tai court of Chiang Rung in Yunnan. King Mongkut proudly wore the gold and diamond watch given by Queen Victoria.

But 'reception' of gifts could also be orchestrated to enhance or diminish their

perceived diplomatic value. At the fullest extent, all gifts would be displayed in the audience hall, treated honorifically, and a full list read out in mutually agreed languages. But this might be selective, or the ruler might not even set eyes upon the gifts before the audience. Little has been written about what happened, or was supposed to happen, to gifts after their acceptance. A limited period of display is clearly *de rigueur*. The number of gifts may be designed to permit sharing and onward distribution. Senior officials will have received their own personal gifts, but there would always be a number of wives and relatives to whom they might be given. At least some of the English gifts seem to have been designed to appeal to an assumed feminine taste. There are instances of diplomatic gifts being displayed over many years in palaces, national museums and the like. Siamese cannons, given to Louis XIV are to this day displayed in the National Army Museum in Paris. Members of French and British missions sometimes raffled or auctioned their personal presents, which were often in the form of commodities, such as tin, wood, ivory, cloth, pepper, tea, etc. The senior envoys might be obliged to treat their gifts as public goods, and these might be auctioned to defray expenses from the public purse. Within days after the return to Moulmein of the McLeod and Richardson missions to Tai states in 1837, the Moulmein Chronicle lists for public auction the items that they brought back with them (Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 109-10). Some of the presents intended for the Chinese Emperor from the failed Amherst mission of 1816 were bought by the Scottish trader Robert Hunter, who was in Bangkok from 1824 for some twenty years. David Richardson, on his mission to Bangkok in 1839, noticed a musical clock in the Siamese audience hall that Hunter had bought in a sale of diplomatic gifts and presented to the King of Siam as a personal gift (Richardson 1840: 228). In the case of the Chinese, imperial bestowals often contained goods that had been previously received as tribute; bestowals did not have to obey the logic of the tribute (*gong*) itself in being local produce.

We have seen some instances of gifts being depreciated. The Persian embassy to Ayutthaya in 1686, complained about the meanness of the King's gifts, for which they blamed his chief minister, Constantine Phaulkon, a European expatriate. The French mission of the previous year was favoured by this official, however, notwithstanding that he cast doubt (ironically perhaps) on whether their gold might not be copper. They received so many gifts that they could not transport them all back to France, and had to leave some elephants and bales of cloth behind. The American envoy Edmund Roberts, visiting Bangkok in 1833, reports officials checking to see whether his gifts were appropriate to give the King. They complained that the colour of some silk was not best chosen to please His Majesty. Roberts (1837) also records that some 'painted boxes' brought by Burney in 1826 had not been accepted, as being 'not suitable'. This is a nice instance also of the cross-referencing that went on between missions. King Mongkut searched the records of the lavish 17th century French embassies to Ayutthaya in order to see if he could make Sir John Bowring's embassy in 1855 even more welcome (Thailand 1936: 227).

A variant of the less than wholehearted acceptance of a gift is to say something like: 'Thanks, but next time could I have ...' Several instances of this occur in McLeod's missions to Tai states in 1837, when he was asked for reading glasses, or wine glasses

or speciality hand guns, etc., even for garden seeds. A nice instance is recorded in the mission of Van Wuysthoff to the King of Laos in 1641:

“The King was delighted with the presents, but begged that next time they would send him some water-dogs, and other big dogs, cockatoos, Agra doves with peacock tails, with different kinds of rabbits, large carpets and fine linen.” (Van Wuysthoff 1987: 376)

### China 1793

The Macartney mission to China in 1793 was quite large and grand by British standards, with a total of 95 members (including a military detachment, artisans to set up the gifts, German musicians, and so on), not counting those who stayed behind in Canton (Guangzhou) (see Hevia 1995 and bibliography therein). It was not such a big deal for the Chinese authorities, who annually received embassies of 200 or more people. In fact, 200 was an upper limit imposed at times. Embassies of 1,000 or more people (with a further 2,000 remaining at the frontier) are recorded.

The presents (as the English usually called them) taken for the Emperor (and to a lesser extent his officials) were considerable. They were valued at £15,610. They were packed in 600 ‘packages’, which required 3,000 ‘coolies’ (workers, porters), 200 horses, 90 wagons and 40 barrows to transport them from Canton to Peking. It is of interest to consider, therefore, why the somehow disappointing nature of the gifts should feature so large in explanations of the difficulties and overall failure, from the English point of view, of the mission. Of course, there were other aspects of protocol that exacerbated relations. And there were, no doubt, even more substantive, conjunctural political issues involved. Here were two expanding empires that had recently become neighbours. Specifically, the Chinese were suspicious about the East India Company’s possible involvement in the current Chinese war with Nepalese Ghurkhas in Tibet. But England was, after all, China’s major Western trading ‘partner’.

The status of the gifts was linked to the main problem of protocol for the English, which was that of upholding sovereignty and equality of status with the Chinese. This was, in a sense, a contradiction in terms and insurmountable – and yet, maybe avoidable; there’s the rub. But this was not, in fact, an overriding issue for the English. The Chinese attached triangular paper flags to each of the packages before transmission, which announced that they were ‘English tribute articles’, which the English had translated to them, and so acquiesced.

Lord Macartney was asked on arrival at Canton for a list of the gifts. This was standard practice in most, if not all, Asian states. Either side could, if they wished, make heavy weather of this moment in the protracted *rite de passage* of an embassy. It was hardly surprising since the gifts were, like any trade goods, or more so, carefully packaged and sealed. The questioning provided knowledge that could help prepare for their reception and display, their size, value, requirements for setting up, and for distinguishing ‘warlike stores’ (both those intended as gifts and others). Such a customary/customs declaration could also serve as a kind of insurance against loss and



legitimate claims for compensation against the host country.

Macartney seems to have caused offence and thrown the mission as a whole off balance from the very start. The Chinese accounts record him as being uncooperative, arrogant and boastful. He exaggerated the value, originality, ingeniousness and Englishness of the main gifts (including, as a centrepiece, an orrery or planetarium) and the time needed to assemble them (one month) and the impossibility of dismantling them thereafter. The latter assertion was challenged in quite empirical terms by the Emperor. Most of the diplomatic damage seems to have been done before any package had even been opened. On arrival in Peking:

“... Macartney was taken on an extensive tour of the palaces in Rehe,<sup>1</sup> shown a profusion of European spheres, orreries, clocks, and musical automats, and told that this was only one portion of the emperor’s collection of such devices. The ambassador commented, in fact, “that our presents must shrink from the comparison and ‘hide their diminished heads’”. Macartney’s signs of modesty at this point appear, however, to have come too late to actually affect the court’s evaluation of his character” (Hevia 1993).

Whether or not Macartney’s behaviour increased Chinese suspicions of some underlying British intentions is one matter, but clearly the issue exacerbated the imperial attitude to ‘*gong*’ as basically ‘local products’ presented as a part of an unequal but harmonious and consensual political relationship. The Emperor was thus moved to write to King George III, in these much-anthologised terms:

“The Celestial Empire, ruling all within the four seas, simply concentrates on carrying out the affairs of Government properly, and does not value rare and precious things ... we have never valued ingenious articles, nor do we have the slightest need of your Country’s manufactures.” (Hevia 1993: 57)

Elsewhere, the imperial rhetoric speaks of wanting envoys to come empty-handed and return fully laden (*hou-wang po-lai* cited in Sarasin 1977: 149). In practice, substance was no doubt also appreciated as well as form and intention.

The Chinese did, however, accept the English gifts. When the British military invaded China in 1860, they looted the Yuanming Garden in Peking. Amongst the loot were cannons presented by Macartney in 1793. They are said to have been returned to the Woolwich Arsenal in London where they had been made. This could stand as an extreme case of the negation of a gift, the forcible retaking in circumstances of humiliation.

<sup>1</sup> Now Chengde in Hebei province.



## Siam 1822-1857

John Crawford adopted a comparably haughty manner in 1822 on the occasion of the first major European embassy to Siam for about 140 years. He refers in his journal to the conversation concerning gifts with the governor of the port at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River, as:

“... a good specimen of the indelicacy and rapacity which we afterwards found so characteristic of the Siamese Court and its officers.” (Crawford 1967)

And when later the more portable presents were displayed at the main audience, and a list read out:

“I make no doubt they were represented as tribute or offerings, although of this it was impossible to obtain proof. The letter of the Governor-General was neither read nor exhibited, notwithstanding the distinct pledge which I had been given to that effect.”

Crawford also notes with distaste that whereas a shortfall of four pieces of muslin cloth had been noted, the over delivery of two more valuable pieces of velvet cloth had not. Crawford's assistant, Lieutenant Finlayson, also refers to the officials' 'greed for presents', a phrase which becomes a standard trope on the English side (Finlayson 1826).

Crawford's mission was regarded as pretty disastrous by the English as well as the Siamese. The latter would not concede trading benefits; the former would not trade weapons (which the Portuguese and Americans were prepared to do). He did nonetheless present 300 flintlocks with bayonets and a twin-barelled shotgun. He returned to Calcutta (Kolkata) with a flea in his ear, with gifts of ivory, gum benjamin, cardamom, tin, refined sugar and gambodge and a letter from the King to the Governor of Bengal, in which he says: “The Governor of Bengal, with good-will chose to send Mr Crawford to convey *offerings* to his Majesty ..” (*Italics in English original*). Prince Chetsada, the future King Rama III, also sent return gifts in his capacity as the King's officer in charge of royal trading. All this notwithstanding, the Siamese records (Thiphakorawong 1961) describe Crawford's behaviour in much the same terms as the Chinese did Macartney, as 'intimidating', 'proud', 'ensorious' and 'excessive'.

Four years later, it was a different story. There was a new King on the Siamese throne. The English were engaged in a war with the Burmese empire. Each side needed the other. Henry Burney (whose patience and personal charm contrasted with Crawford's manner) headed a second, longer mission in 1826. By the end of the mission, the war had been concluded in the British favour, as had the embassy itself. However, note the striking differences in British approach to protocol. Burney had learned enough Thai to know what was going on and to make an honorific speech before the King. He sent to the port governor, in advance, from Singapore, and in Thai, a full list of members, credentials, gifts and 'Warlike Stores'. They had the benefit of advice from the Scottish

merchant, Robert Hunter, who had set up residence in Bangkok a year or two earlier and was obligingly trading arms to the King of Siam. Burney's armed merchant ship was permitted to proceed upriver to Bangkok with its guns aboard; with shot and powder left behind at the river mouth as a compromise.

There is a continual theme of gift exchange in Burney's journal. One senior Siamese official requested gifts and failed to reciprocate; he also mocked a gift of emeralds for being made of glass. Burney exceeded custom by making some additional parting gifts of jewels. The King showed exceptional friendliness and informality by requesting to see Burney's six-year old son, to whom he gave 'a number of Toys and other Articles'.

Sir James Brooke, the 'sultan of Brunei' (or as the Thai saw him 'the governor of Labuan', made an attempt at a mission in 1850. It was a bad time as the King (Rama III) was ill, and the succession was still being debated. His entourage was more appropriate than that of the American, Joseph Balestier, with two private ships, gifts and a retinue of army officers. Brooke was not given an audience, however, and he took his gifts home with him. In addition to these disappointments, he had found the accommodation offered to him beneath his dignity. It was, in fact, a substantial bamboo structure such as the highest ranking prince or official of the state might have built especially for him. Brooke found a brick-built (*pukka*) house while his retinue used the bamboo house. As with the payments of per diem, the British side misunderstood Siamese practices.

The Bowring mission to Siam in 1855 – with a return Siamese embassy to London in 1857 – marked another watershed moment in Anglo-Siamese relations. Whereas the 1826 mission could be said to represent a late mercantilist moment, 1855 was an early imperialist moment (Hobsbawm 1969: 138-9). Sir John Bowring – knighted just before and specifically for the event – was Governor of Hong Kong. This was a Foreign Office responsibility. The earlier missions had come from the East India Company in India, sent by the Governor of Bengal (the East India Company was to be dissolved in 1858) and so were not regarded as true 'royal embassies' by the Siamese side. King Rama IV (Mongkut) had succeeded in 1851, the year of the last Siamese tribute mission to China. He was a highly educated and astute man, very interested in European as well as Buddhist culture. He had been present at the earlier British missions from 1822 and spent many years as abbot of a famous temple in Bangkok. He was both 'modernising' and absolutist. He corresponded, in his own excellent English, with Bowring for more than a year before the mission in 1855. The Siamese state was confident and still expansionist. The British had fought a war with China (1839-42), one outcome of which had been the concession of Hong Kong. In 1852, the British had annexed Pegu (Bago) in central Burma (Myanmar), reducing further the power of the Burmese kingdom, which had for centuries been a Siamese security concern. When Bowring arrived, Siamese troops were being drilled in English by English instructors, and the audience hall was decorated with pictures of the Pope, Queen Victoria and the King of Portugal, and images of the Great Exhibition in London of 1851.

Bowring knew in advance that his mission was welcome. One might almost say it was a success waiting to happen, although there was much negotiation and some cliffhanging moments during the relatively short progress of the mission. Bowring obtained – not without some resistance – a number of protocol concessions, two of

which he reminisced about frequently in later years. One was being able to wear his sword at the royal audience (and thus appear before the King just as he had before Queen Victoria, as he put it). The second was permission for an armed British warship to be allowed to travel upriver to Bangkok, the first time apparently in Siamese history that this had been allowed. The King showed great intimacy, allowing a 'private' audience (the word passed into the Thai language), and reportedly offering and even lighting Bowring's cigar.

But oddly, Bowring makes no mention anywhere, as far as I can tell, of any presents. They had been delayed and partly destroyed when the ship carrying them sank after leaving Singapore. They were finally presented some six months later when a junior member of the mission – Harry Parkes, later to be Ambassador to Japan – returned from England with Queen Victoria's letter ratifying the Treaty. King Mongkut acknowledged receipt of the gifts in a letter devoted entirely to the matter, dated 7 May 1856. This lists those gifts received in good order, those in an 'injured state' or 'irretrievably damaged', and those 'completely destroyed' (see Appendix). The King writes:

"We do not blame Mr. H. Parkes in any term for the portion of the presents designed for Us by Her Gracious Britannic Majesty some being entirely lost some very injurious in being of no use and losing their fine appearance, for the stated unfortunate accident is believable and heard by Us from many others, and such an unforeseen accident is in difficulty of human power to promptly prevent; merely we are thankful to Mr. Parkes for his great endeavour to reobtain their portion for Us.

... We are not sorry for being lost and injurious of the portions of these valued presents."

A much longer letter (dated 15 May 1856), mainly dealing with other matters following on the Treaty, refers to Parkes in exceptionally complimentary terms, and includes the following:

"...he has repaired several articles of the Royal presents sent to us from Her Britannic Majesty according to his ability, and the conveniences obtainable here, and has delivered us a certain portion thereof in due times, at the last of which times he has a sealed written document from us in their receipt, in which we have stated that he is harmless or blameless indeed, for the articles being lost and injured of the Royal presents entrusted to his care for us, from Her Britannic Majesty, in an unforeseen moment, an accident which he met off Singapore at the time of the transhipment of those articles on board the Steam Frigate "Auckland" etc. We have expressed our sincere thanks to him, by bestowing upon him two bat eye rings, manufactured in Siam, and a few articles of gilt, silver cigar case, plates and water pot together with a long pipe of 'Rajawangse' bamboo, which are the same articles for the insignia of our ministers of considerable rank here" (Coèdes 1927-8).

Some of the English gifts are still to be seen in the National Museum in Bangkok.

It is interesting to note that even the most damaged gifts continued to be treated with a certain reverence and did not lose their status as royal gifts, whether or not some of them were subsequently repaired. The incident was not allowed to detract from the auspiciousness of the rest of the proceedings. The overriding importance attached to the Royal letter is marked by the fact that King Mongkut travelled in person to the mouth of the Chao Phraya River to greet it on arrival, as if it had been Queen Victoria in person. The emphatic exculpation of Harry Parkes reminds us that, at other times and places, an ambassador might well have been punished for neglect of royal presents.

Bowring continued to be a frequent correspondent and adviser to King Mongkut. He was to receive an honorific title, which in the Thai language is also a 'royal gift', of *phraya siammitre mahayos* with *sakdina* rank of 2,000, and received a cash gift of £1,000 (which he said was not enough!). The title roughly translates as Most Honoured Lord Friend of Siam. His relationship with King Mongkut is part of what a distinguished Thai scholar and diplomat has called Siamese Anglo-philial in the second half of the 19th century (Theerawat 1993). The fact that Bowring was, at least earlier in his life, a republican and utilitarian, Unitarian and Europhile gives an extra piquancy to this exchange relationship.

## Conclusion

The theme of 'the disappointing gift' has served as a tool for contrasting two famous diplomatic encounters between Britain and East Asian empires. In the Chinese case (Lord Macartney's mission to China in 1793), both sides were disappointed, for different reasons. Nonetheless, the gifts were accepted, but this did not help make the mission a success. As if to mark a continuing vendetta, some of the gifts were seized by force sixty-seven years later and returned to England. In the Siamese case (Sir John Bowring's mission to Siam in 1855), neither side seems to have expressed disappointment, although there was good reason, since many of the gifts had been damaged or destroyed in a shipwreck. Even the damaged gifts were presented and accepted with exaggerated statements of disculpation. No damage was done thereby to the mission, which was regarded as a success by both sides at the time. This contrast, in turn, serves to support the view, which I share, of James Hevia, a Sinologist historian, who insists that the Chinese attitude to the question of gifts was not 'some timeless attitude of traditional Chinese culture', but 'a specific response to events going on right then in the embassy' (Hevia 1995). Of course, Chinese 'traditional culture' in this matter (specifically *bin li*, so called 'guest ritual') does have many elements of continuity, as do its refractions in the practices of tributary Southeast Asian states, such as Siam, over a period of some 600 years.

This was at least as much a set of strategies as a set of rules. In the end, it was the politics of the conjuncture, and the moment, that determined the outcome. It is interesting to recall that Mauss ends his essay on the gift on this note, 'l'art suprême, la *Politique*, au sens socratique du mot.', within the context of seeing the gift as part of a 'total social fact'. This emphasis on the context of power relations contradicts the idea of 'clash of cultures', which tends to be a Eurocentric view, and one which tends to deny agency

to the non-European side. It also contradicts the prioritising of ‘ritual’ in discussion of Asian diplomatic protocol, as in the dichotomies, politics and ritual or statecraft and ritual. Crawford sensed this, but drew the wrong conclusions, and failed to make use of this insight for his own behaviour or diplomatic strategy:

“The Siamese are a very ceremonious people, attaching, like most Oriental nations, an undue and ridiculous importance to mere form and ceremonial, breaches of which are considered in the light of political crimes than offences against mere etiquette” (1967: 349).

Burney had a finer sense of strategy, for instance when he comments, in a style that lacks the derogatory pomposity of Crawford:

“The real truth is, anything is custom or not custom, among these people [the Siamese court in 1826] according as they desire or do not desire to do it.” (Cited in Yule 1858: 119)

This is not, however, usefully thought of in terms of the notions of ‘the invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), or even a bricolage of tradition. In Bourdieu’s terminology, there is something of the ‘mechanics of the model’ as well as ‘the dialectics of strategies’ (Bourdieu 1977: 3-9). But the latter is usually dominant. Bourdieu’s notions of the rhythm and temporal structure of gift exchanges are pertinent here. And yet diplomatic gift exchange is a distinct case that challenges at least one of Bourdieu’s ideas, namely, his notion of *méconnaissance*:

“... the operation of gift exchange presupposes (individual and collective) misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) of the reality of the objective ‘mechanism’ of the exchange, a reality which an immediate response brutally exposes.

In short everything takes place as if agents’ practice, and in particular their manipulation of time, were organized exclusively with a view to concealing from themselves and from others the truth of their practice, which an anthropologist and his models brings to light simply by substituting the timeless model for a scheme which works itself out only in and through time.” (p. 5)

The kind of diplomatic gift exchange considered here is a limiting case of this, and contradicts the idea of ‘misrecognition’. There is a certain amount of plain linguistic and other cultural ignorance on both sides, and there is some prevarication and delay in the process of the exchanges, but the gift transactions described are far from opaque or invisible, nor are their purposes lacking in transparency. The fact that they have to be completed within a limited time frame, and that the final balance of the exchange has to be somehow agreed and recorded by both sides at the conclusion of the mission (the exchange as a whole) puts pressure on both sides to show their hands.

This article has also considered aspects of the ‘social life’ of gift goods (Appadurai 1986), and their re-circulation, redistribution and re-contextualisation, which, like the



gifts themselves, operate across cultural and national boundaries.

The cultural complex ‘diplomatic gift exchange’ – or, in a less reified formulation, ‘the dialectics of diplomatic gift giving’ – is, I hope to have shown, a worthy object of comparative anthropological analysis. At their extremes, historical instances of diplomatic gift giving might be assimilable to such concepts as ‘potlatch’, ‘tournaments of value’, ‘ordeals’ and so on. At a lesser end of a spectrum and as part of established diplomatic relations, they are routine aspects of trading contacts. Diplomacy has famously been described as the conduct of war by other means. Diplomatic gift giving, in early modern times, is a significant element in the management of what Marcel Mauss felicitously calls ‘cette instabilité entre la fête et la guerre’.

### *Appendix*

This document, dated 7 May 1856, written in English by King Mongkut, is reproduced from Georges Coèdes’ partial collection of letters in English by King Mongkut that appeared in the *Journal of the Siam Society* in 1928 (vol. 21: 18-20).

F.O., Siam vol. 5.

L. S.  
Major Rex  
Siamensium

L. S.  
The Chinese Seal for Royal  
letters of the King of Siamese  
Kingdom who is the reigning  
defender and instructor of whole  
people thereof.

Somdech Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut the First King of Siamese Kingdom and its dependencies Laos and etc., and etc., to all and singular to whom these presents shall come greeting:

Whereas Mr. Harry S. Parkes the Bearer to Our Court of Her Britannic Majesty’s Ratification of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce lately concluded with Us and Our Royal brother the Second King has reported to us on his arrival at Bangkok the accident which has befallen the presents in his charge designed for Us by Her Britannic Majesty whereby some had been injured and others entirely lost.

We have accordingly to acknowledge the receipt from Mr. Parkes of the following articles as described and numbered in the List of the Presents subjoined to the letter addressed to Us by Her Britannic Majesty.

1. A silver inkstand richly gilt with figures emblematical of science and art.
2. Two pairs of globes 36 inches in diameter.
3. Two coloured engravings representing the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.
4. A best improved revolver pistol silver mounted in a case.
5. A gold enamelled double eye-glass with watch and gold cable neck chain.
6. A camera and complete photographic apparatus.
11. A collection of ornaments in glass, china and etc.

The above articles have been received by Us in good condition, and of the injured articles Mr. Parkes has also delivered to us.

7. Digby Wyatt's industrial Arts 2 volumes highly illuminated.

12. A collection of coloured diagrams illustrative of physiology, machinery, natural history, etc.

13. A complete set of charts of the Indian and China Seas, all of which have been discoloured or greatly damaged by the action of salt water.

We are informed by Mr. Parkes that by far the larger portion of the collection of philosophical apparatus, illustrative of astronomy, electricity and optics, numbered 8 in the List of Her Majesty's presents are irretrievably damaged.

We have received from him in good order a model of a steamer, a model of a Locomotive Engine and carriages and air pump and a solar gun.

Also a polar clock, gyroscope and stereoscope, but the three latter instruments are of no avail in their present injured state.

The arithmometer and dressing case numbered 9 and 10 in the List of Her Majesty's Presents have not been delivered to Us by Mr. Parkes in consequence, as he informs Us, of their having been completely destroyed.

We do not blame Mr. H. Parkes in any terms for the portion of the presents designed for Us by Her Gracious Britannic Majesty some being entirely lost some very injurious in being of no use and losing of their fine appearance, for the stated unfortunate accident is believable and heard by Us from many others, and such the unforeseen accident is in difficulty of human power to promptly prevent; merely we are thankful to Mr. Parkes for his great endeavour to reobtain their portion for Us.

Whatever of any kind of Britannic manufactures being the valued presents designed Us from Her Britannic Majesty, We are glad to keep for the mark of Her Majesty's kindness toward us and our highest and greatest honour through our descendants and successors that we and they should frequently or always keep in our and their remembrance the very kind favor of Her Gracious Britannic Majesty. We are not sorry for being lost and injurious of the portions of those valued presents.

Given at the Grand Palace in the City of Ratnekosindr Mahindr Auyudia in the province or district of Bangkok on Wednesday of waxing moon in the month of Visakh of the year of the Major Serpent or Quadruped Serpent bearing the number of Siamese Astronomical Era 1218, corresponding to European solar date of the 7<sup>th</sup> May in the year of the Christian Era one thousand eight hundred and fifty six which is the sixth of our reign.

L. S. (manu regia)

S. P. P. M. Mongkut R. S<sup>m</sup>.

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proof



# The Recreation of the Mother-of-Pearl Inlay Door Panels of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha<sup>1</sup>

Weeraya Juntradee

## Background

The recreation of the Thai masterpiece of lacquer arts, the 263-year-old mother-of-pearl inlay door panels of the Scripture Hall of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (*Ho Phra Montien Tham*, see Figs. 1, 2), was initiated by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in 2007, after she observed that the doors had been worn out from years of exposure to sunlight and rain. The princess said restoration must be conducted to ensure that the artistic beauty of such national treasures will be seen by future generations of Thais. The Office of Traditional Arts (OTA) of the Fine Arts Department (FAD) was assigned to make a new pair of door panels of similar artisanship to replace the old door panels, which will be repaired and kept in the Bangkok National Museum (Office of Traditional Arts 2012: 5).

These mother-of-pearl inlay door panels are a cultural heritage of both historical and artistic importance. They were originally installed at the ordination hall of Wat Borom Buddharam in Ayutthaya in 1751, as part of a renovation made during the reign of King Boromakot. Wat Borom Buddharam is a small royal wat, built during the reign of Phra Phetracha (1688-1703), in the centre of Ayutthaya to the south of the palace. According to the evidence found as a note inlaid in mother-of-pearl on one side of the door panel (Fig. 3):

In 1751, Saturday of the fourth waxing period of the moon of the twelfth lunar month in the year of the Goat (the eighth year of the Thai animal cycle) of the third year of the decade, the King had mother-of-pearl designs drawn for the decoration of the door panels of the ordination hall of Wat Borom Buddharam. Two hundred craftsmen started working on Wednesday of the ninth waxing period of the twelfth lunar month in the year of the goat of the third year of the decade. The work lasted for 6 months and 24 days. The king granted clothes, silver and gold ornament and a large sum of money to all the craftsmen. As well, the craftsmen were served two meals a day and this was not deducted from the payments. On the contrary, the craftsmen were rewarded with payments of 30 pieces of currency for each panel they finished. (Julathusana 2001: 13)

<sup>1</sup> This is an adaptation of an article which originally appeared in Thai. We are grateful to Mr Anandha Chuchoti, Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, for permission to reproduce the article and many of its illustrations. Except where shown otherwise, illustrations are courtesy of the Office of Traditional Arts, Fine Arts Department.



Fig. 1 (left). The old mother-of-pearl inlay door panels (Julathusana, *Thai Mother-of-Pearl Inlay*, p. 13. Courtesy of River Books, Bangkok)

Fig. 2 (above). The Scripture Hall of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (*Ho Phra Montien Tham*) (<http://kanchanapisek.or.th/kp6/sub/book/book.php?book=30&chap=2&page=t30-2-infodetail03.html>)

Fig. 3 (below). Part of a note inlaid in mother-of-pearl on one side of a door panel (photo by author)



Prior to the loss of the capital to the Burmese in 1767, these doors were removed and stored for more than 100 years in a number of unidentified locations before being installed in 1939 as the middle entrance on the west side of the Scripture Hall of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, who is widely regarded in Thailand as the ‘Father of Thai Art History’, wrote a letter, dated 10 October 1939, to his brother, HRH Prince Narisara Nuvattivongse, who was himself a renowned designer and architect, in which he provided the following account of the history of the door panels:

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The three pieces of mother-of-pearl inlay belonging to the Ayutthaya Period that were found at Wat Salapoon in Ayutthaya included a large pair of door panels and two Buddhist manuscript cabinets. It is known that Phra Thammaraja, an abbot in the reign of King Rama III, brought them from Wat Borom Buddharam. Some parts of the panels were damaged by fire. It can be concluded that they are the original door and window panels of the ordination hall of Wat Borom Buddharam. This hall caught fire at some point and many mother-of-pearl inlay window and door panels were damaged and lost. These remaining ones were restored and moved to Wat Salapoon by the abbot, Phra Thammaraja. The history of each piece differs as follows.

A large pair of mother-of-pearl inlay door panels with flame motifs (*kranok*) were in good condition, only some portions were lost. They were made into panels for the window in the middle of the front side of the ordination hall, which was the same position as it was at Wat Borom Buddharam. The window has a *prasat* spire. This pair of mother-of-pearl panels was moved to Bangkok during the reign of King Rama V and was not restored but kept in the museum until the reign of King Rama VII. One day, when I went to Hor Phra Montien Tham in the Emerald Buddha Temple where the mother-of-pearl inlay cabinets from the Library Hall were stored during the restoration of the temple, I found that a large window space in front of Hor Phra Montien Tham Hall would be a perfect fit with the pair of mother-of-pearl inlay panels which were kept in the museum. I told Chao Phraya Worapong about this idea and he agreed to manage this project. I saw that they were being repaired in Hor Phra Montien Tham. I think that they would have been already installed by now. (Julathusana 2001: 14)

Prince Narisara wrote a letter, dated 20 October 1939, in response to Prince Damrong, in which he advised: “I would like to report that the mother-of-pearl inlay panels have been already installed and well-fitted to the front aperture of Hor Phra Montien Tham.” (Julathusana 2001: 14).

Almost eighty years later, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn had the old doors removed to be preserved as national heritage, and assigned the Office of Traditional Arts, Fine Arts Department, to make a new pair of door panels for the Ho Phra Montien Tham in the same pattern as the old in every respect. (Office of Traditional Arts 2012: 50).

## Implementation

During the implementation of this project that lasted almost six years from 2007 to 2012, the OTA artisans and academic artists studied the traditional processes of mother-of-pearl inlay from the past. This meant first understanding the traditional techniques and materials used—many of which have become almost extinct due to current economic and social conditions—and then learning how to recreate them on the new door panels. Approximately thirty highly specialized and skilled craftsmen worked together on all the requisite procedures, with a dedicated commitment to recreating as accurately as possible this most meticulous, exquisite piece of Thai traditional art.

The following chart details the lengthy implementation process that was necessary to recreate the door panels (Office of Traditional Arts 2012: 14).

Fiscal year	Implementation of the restoration work
2007	The OTA cooperated with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to find solid golden teak suitable for the door panels. Artists studied and drew the pattern for the door panels. The OTA administrators identified and provided the requisite equipment and material supplies.
2008	Craftsmen initiated the woodworking process of the door panels. The mother-of-pearl artisans began the preparation of the shells by cutting them into the requisite patterns.
2009	Craftsmen continued the woodworking process of the door panels. They also prepared the surface of the door panels with lacquer. The mother-of-pearl artisans continued the arduous task of cutting the shells into patterns. They then fitted the finished shells into the panels and applied the inlay process.
2010	The mother-of-pearl artisans continued cutting the shells into patterns. They also continued fitting the finished shells into the panels and applied the inlay process. They then filled the surface with lacquer and polish. They lastly prepared the surface of the back of the panels to be gilded using the <i>lai rot nam</i> technique.
2011	The mother-of-pearl artisans continued cutting the shells into patterns. They finalized fitting the finished shells into the panels and completed the inlay process. They then finalized filling the surface with lacquer and polish. They continued the gilding using the <i>lai rot nam</i> technique.
2012	The artisans completed the gilding using the <i>lai rot nam</i> technique. Workers installed the new door panels. The OTA produced and published 1,000 copies of a book detailing the recreation project.

All of the processes described above, such as woodworking, preparing the shells, cutting the shell into patterns, lacquering, the inlay process and polishing, required plenty of time, artistic talent and skilled craftsmanship. The shell cutting process alone took about three years and used more than 1,300 kg of Turban shell (*Turbo Astraea*, Thai: *muk fai*) (Office of Traditional Arts 2012: 88) imported from Myanmar, Indonesia, Australia and Japan. Lacquer was ordered from northern Thailand, but was mostly imported from Myanmar, and mixed with the carbon deposit from burned banana leaves or coconut shell to make a substance called *rak samuk*; this was then applied in several



layers to fill in the gaps in the design. Each layer took one week to dry. The finished surface was then sanded by hand and given another coat of lacquer, and then polished with the ashes (carbon deposit) from burned banana leaves and deer antlers.

The completed recreated traditional mother-of-pearl inlay door panels were installed at The Scripture Hall of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha on 30 March 2013, and the ancient door panels were then removed to the OTA for restoration, before going on display at the Bangkok National Museum thereafter.

### The patterns

Mother-of-pearl inlay displays an intricate interplay between the glistening pearly colours of the shell (the design) and the shiny black of the lacquer background (the surrounding space). The designs and patterns that are used in mother-of-pearl inlay form part of a group of designs referred to collectively as “Thai designs” (*lai Thai*). They include such basic designs as *lai kranok* (flame motif), *lai krajang* (lotus bud motif), *lai prajam yam* (four-petal flower motif), *lai phum* (pointed bush motif) and *lai dao* (star motif). These designs may be expanded and developed by craftsmen to form *lai kranok krueawan* (intertwined creepers motif) or *lai kranok plaew kruea tao* (intertwined sprays

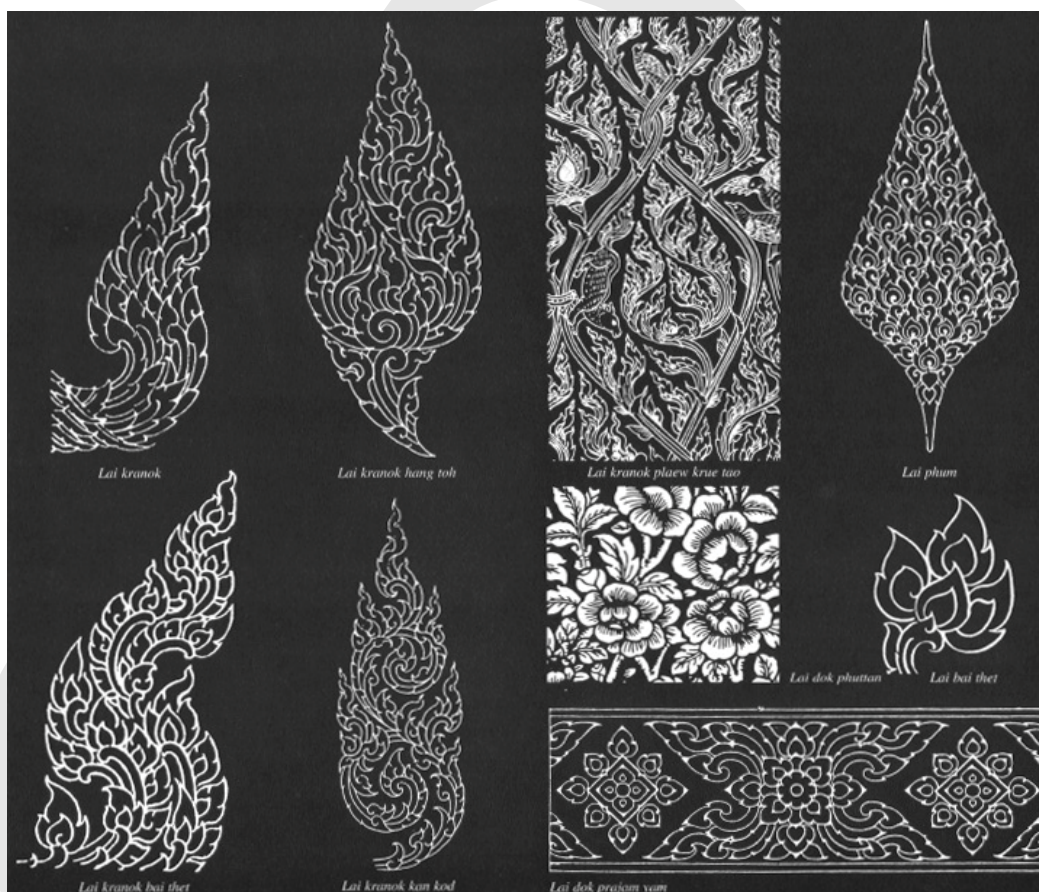
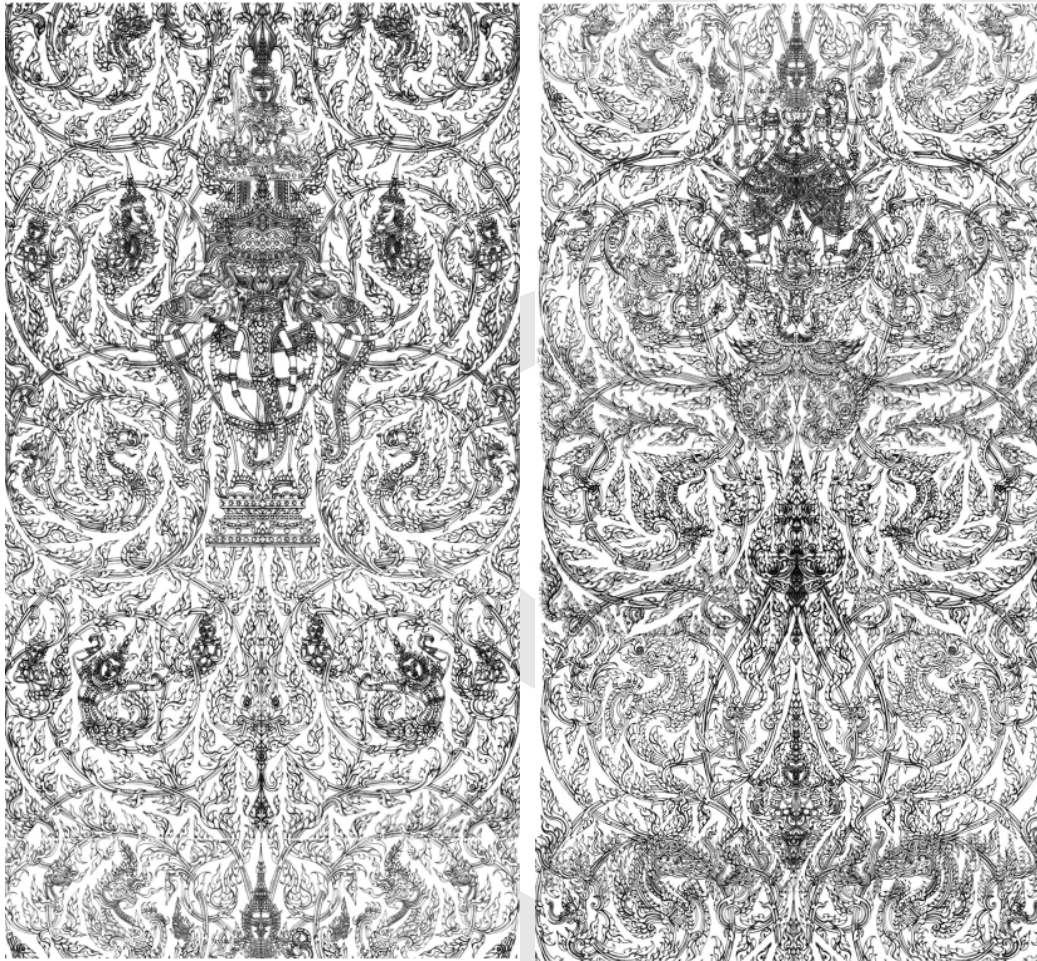


Fig. 4. Some examples of Thai designs (*lai Thai*) (Julathusana, *Thai Mother-of-Pearl Inlay*, p. 57, pp. 59-60. Courtesy of River Books, Bangkok.)



motif), *lai kan kot* (scrolls motif) and *lai na kradan* (plank design of continuous lozenges framed by *kranok*). The more geometric static motifs are used as dividers and frames. (Julathusana 2001: 56)

The door panels are bordered on four sides by a four-petal floral and scroll motif called respectively *lai prajam yam* and *lai dok si klip*. The background of the pattern comprises flamboyant scrolls, *lai kan kot kranok plaeo*, while the center depicts various gods and mythical animals such as Wessuwan, Theppanom and Norasingh, as well as Brahma on his Hamsa goose, Indra on his three-headed elephant Airavata/Erawan (Fig.



Depictions of gods and mythical beings (Courtesy Handicraft and Thai Arts Section, Office of Traditional Arts, FAD)

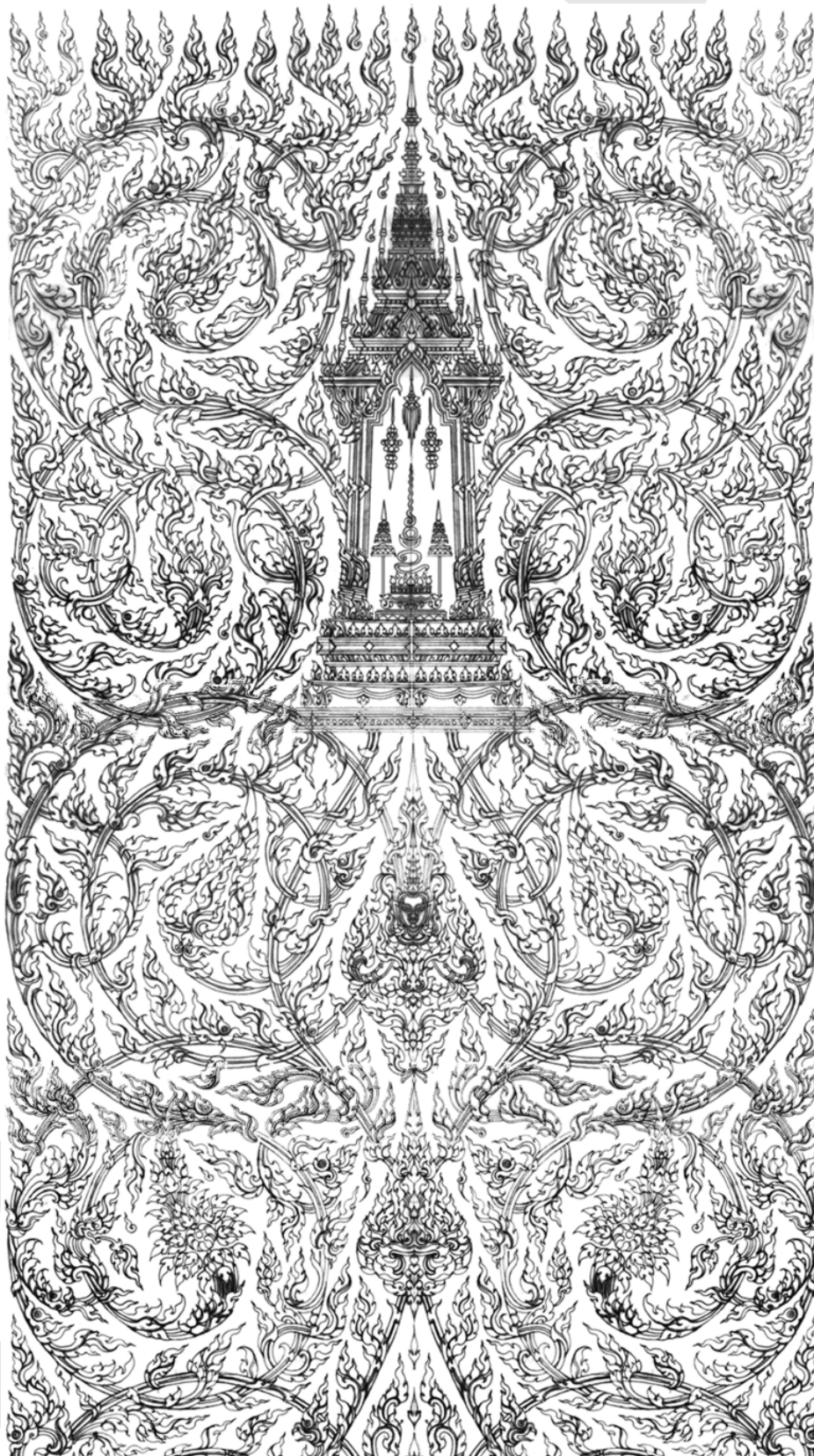
Fig 5 (left). Indra on his elephant Airavata (Erawan) Fig 6 (right). Vishnu on Garuda

Fig 7 (opposite). The celestial abode at the top with the *unalom* symbol (a tuft of hair, which is the mark of a great man) inside, flanked by umbrellas.

5), Vishnu mounted on Garuda (Fig. 6) and some celestial abodes (Fig. 7). At the end of the flamboyant floral scrolls, *kranok kruea tao*, mythical creatures of the Himaphan Forest are depicted.

The two door panels have the same patterns; some areas displaying the craftsmanship of the late Ayutthaya period were discovered in tact on the top of each door panel, and it was clear that these had never been repaired, although most of the other areas of







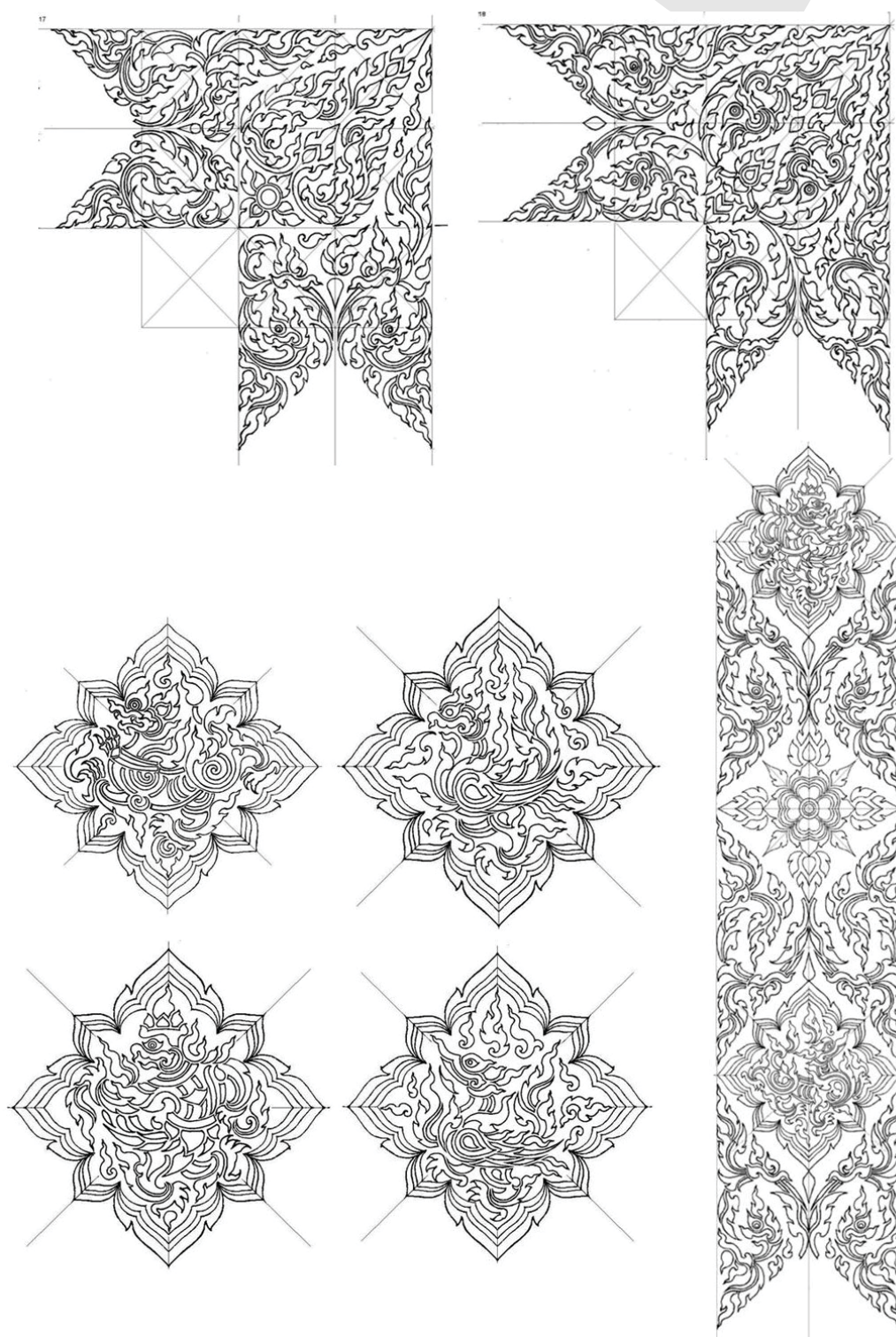


Fig. 8. The door panels are bordered on four sides by a four-petal floral motif and scroll motif (Thai: lai prajam yam and lai dok si klip). Inside the four-petal floral motif are depicted mythical creatures from the Himaphan forest: (from top left) singha, vayuphak, garuda, hamsa

the panels have been repaired many times over the last two centuries. Further, it is noticeable that the rhythm of the lines of the *kranok* on the left side is more beautiful, more delicate, and smoother than on the right side. (Office of Traditional Arts 2012: 20)



Fig 9. An area at the top of the right-hand panel never repaired since the late Ayutthaya era (photo by author)



## Woodworking

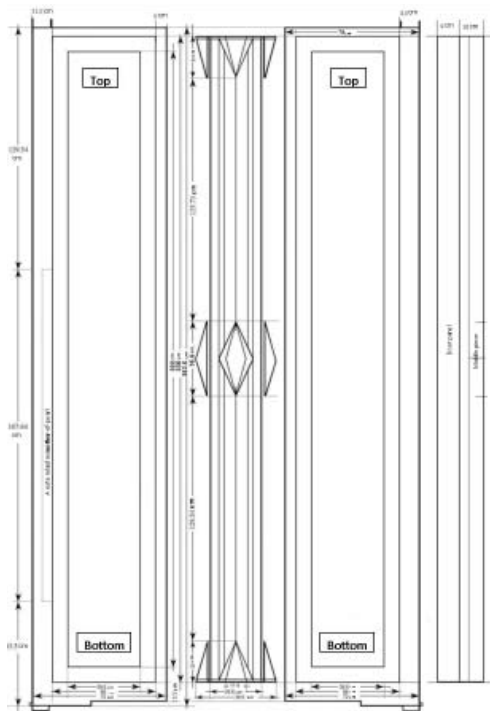


Fig. 10. Drawing, detail of the solid golden teak door panels. Each is 28 inches wide, 143 inches high and 3.5 inches thick (72 x 363.5 x 9.0 cm)



Figs. 11-12 (above). Solid golden teak from Chiang Mai province was brought to the Office of Traditional Arts on 19 November 2008.

Fig 13 (left). The craftsmen started the woodworking process and improved the strength of the wood by inserting a rust-resistant metal sheet into each of the wood panels

Fig. 14 (below). When the carving of the panels was finished, they were taken to the site to ensure that they fit properly.





## Preparing the shells



Figs. 14-16 (above). The shells were first cleaned and smoothed using grinding machines to remove the brownish-green, rough outer surface until the inner glossy white and pink part was reached.

Fig. 17 (left). The shells are sawn or cut into patterns.

Fig. 18 (below). The cut shells are attached with latex glue to thin tracing paper.



## Preparing and applying the lacquer



Fig. 19 (top left). Lacquer is filtered through a thin white cloth to remove impurities (if this is done in sunlight, the lacquer will have less viscosity and seep through more easily) and then heated at a low temperature. The water in the sap will be vaporized and the sap becomes stickier.

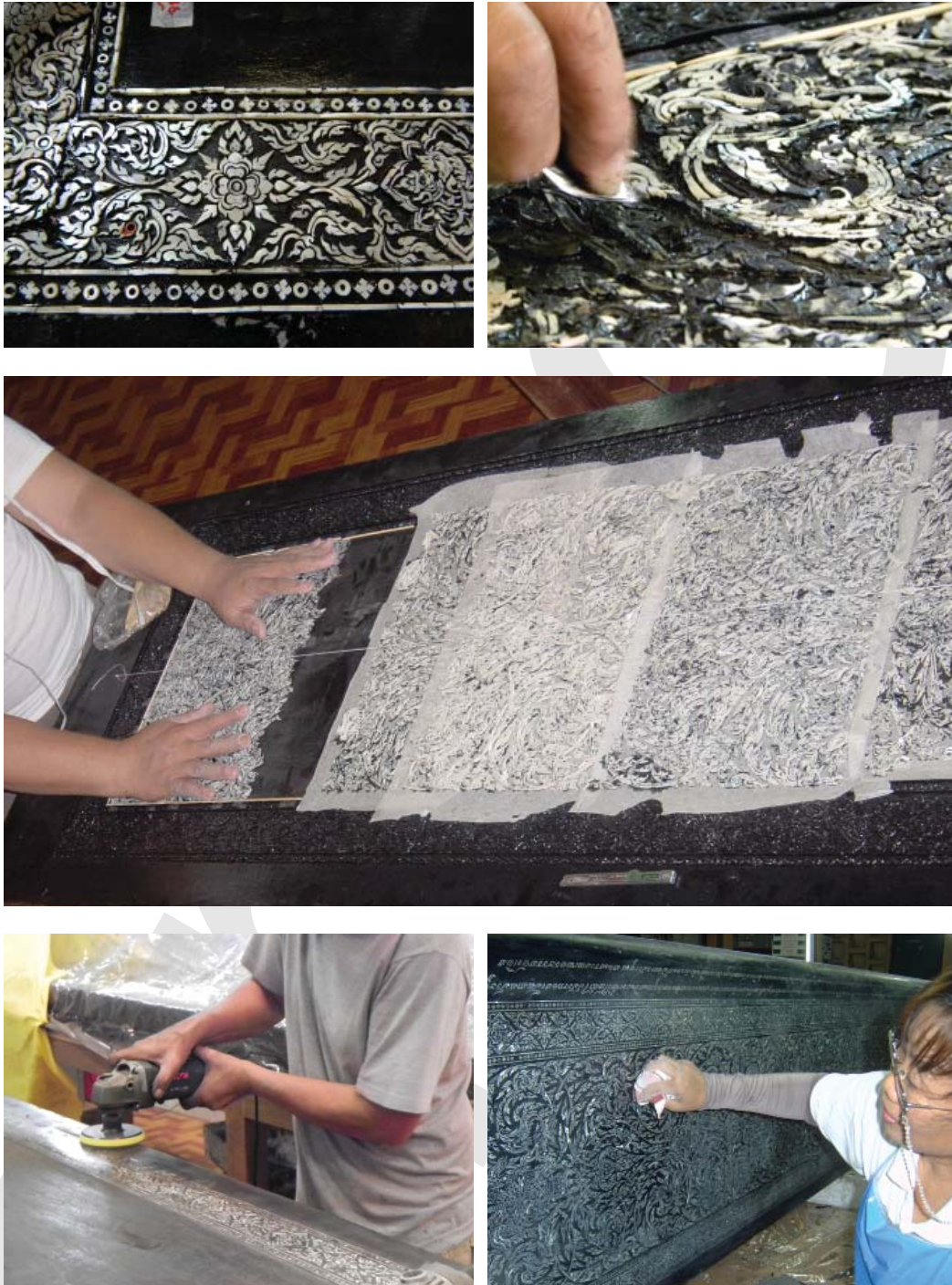
Fig. 20 (top right). A substance called *rak samuk* is made by mixing lacquer with charcoal made from the pounded carbon deposit of burned banana leaves or coconut shells. It is used to fill any spaces remaining between the pieces of shell inlay.

Figs. 21-22 (above). Preparing the panels with lacquer and *rak samuk*.

Fig. 23 (left). The shells are transferred to thin tracing paper, and attached with lacquer. When the lacquer is dry, the tracing paper is burnt from the spaces that have no shell.



## The inlay process



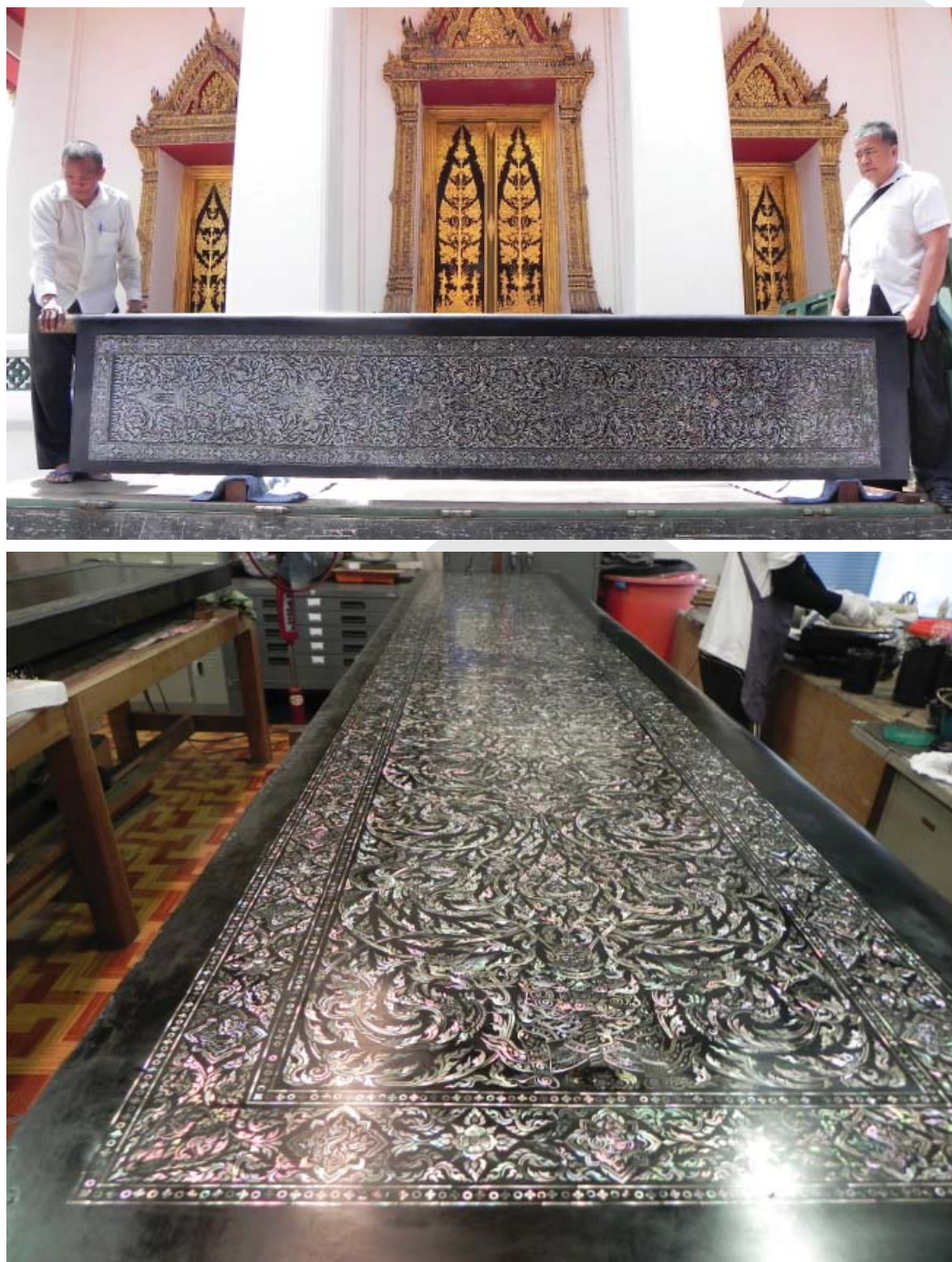
Figs. 24-25 (above). The inlay process begins with the pattern of the border and then the pattern of the middle area.

Fig. 26 (middle). The pattern is attached with lacquer both on the panel and the back of the tracing paper.

Filling the foundation with repeated layers of *rak samuk*. Each layer has to be allowed to dry before the next one is applied. *Rak samuk* is applied until the surface between the shell design reaches the same level as the inlay design.

Figs. 27-28 (bottom). The first stage of polishing uses machinery. Later the panel must be rubbed carefully by hand. The finished surface is then sanded and polished with lacquer, *samuk* powder and the ash of burnt deer antlers.





Figs. 29-30 (above). One of the finished panels was put on display during an exhibition at the Bangkok National Museum marking Thai Cultural Heritage Conservation Day, 2-8 April 2012.

Figs. 31-36 (opposite). The gilding process is called *lai rot nam* in Thai, or literally a design made by washing. The lacquer is mixed with a vermillion pigment and turns red. After the pattern has been traced onto the panel, *horadan* (a water-soluble fixative) is painted over the pattern to mask areas not to be gilded. A coat of thin lacquer is applied to the whole area and gold leaf is laid on the pattern area. The panel is then given a thorough washing to carefully remove the gold leaf attached with the water soluble fixative, leaving only the sharp and clear gold leaf pattern which was stuck to the lacquer.



*The lai rot nam process*

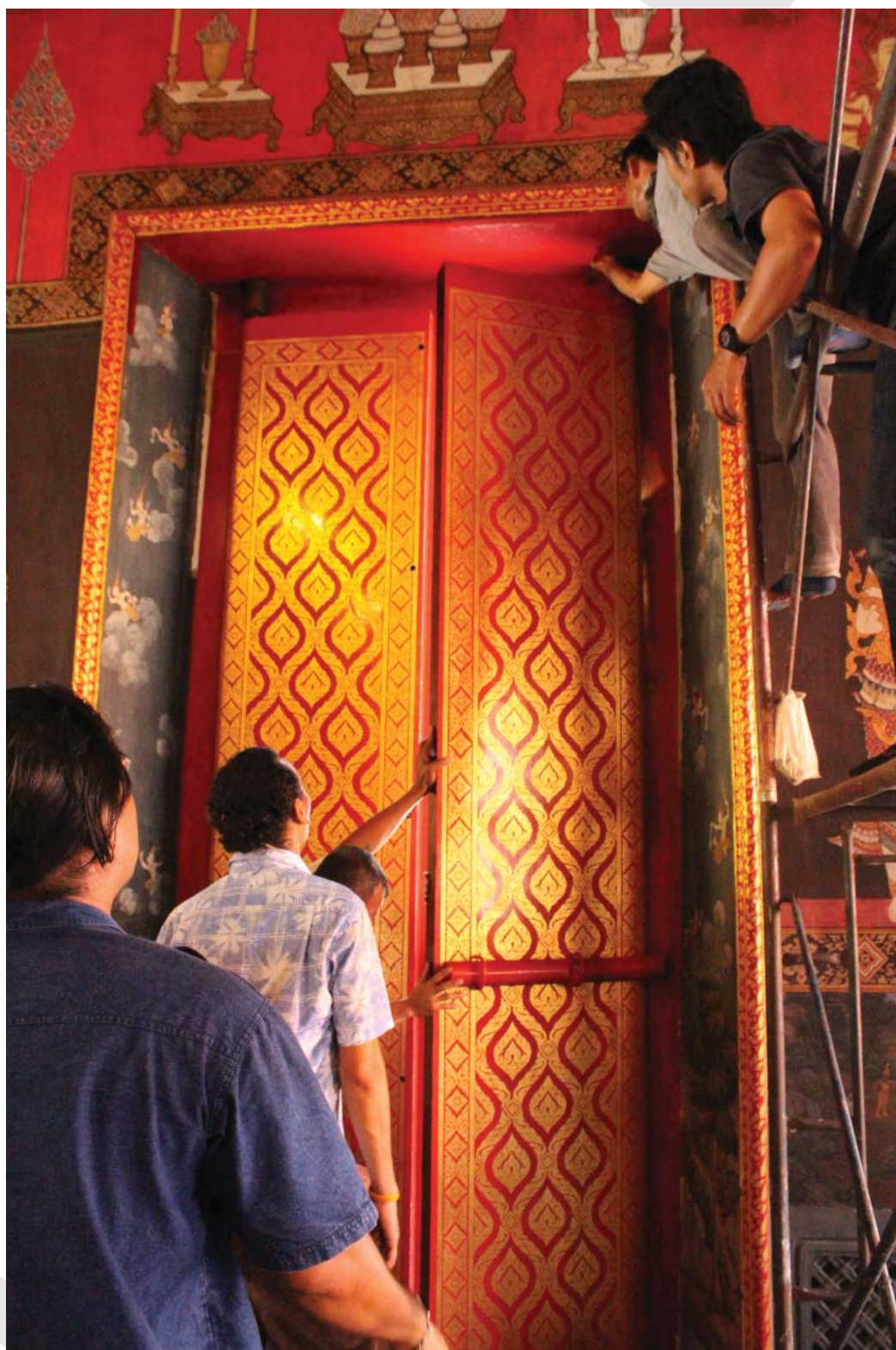


Fig 37. The finished door is set in place; viewed from inside

Fig 38 (opposite). The finished door, viewed from outside







Fig. 39. HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn placing a piece of shell of the unalom into the new door panel at the opening ceremony of the special exhibition at the Bangkok National Museum marking Thai Cultural Heritage Conservation Day, 17 August 2011.

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# Treatise on Smallpox Vaccination

by Dan Beach Bradley  
translation by Quentin (Trais) Pearson

## Translator's introduction

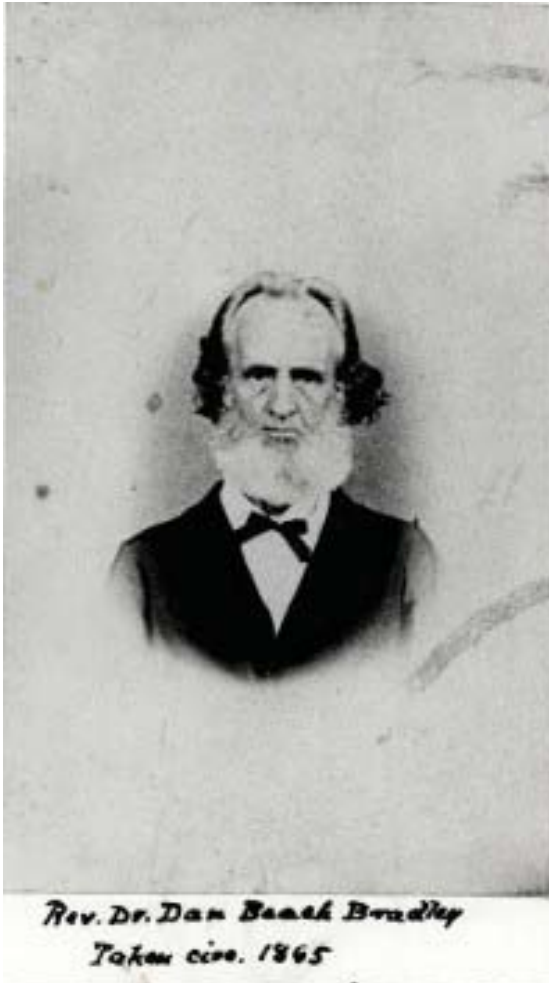
In December 1842, the American missionary-physician Dan Beach Bradley (1804-1873) watched helplessly as his eight-month old daughter succumbed to smallpox. Although Bradley was well acquainted with the use of both variolation and Jennerian vaccination to inoculate against smallpox, he had been unable to locate either active smallpox or cowpox in Siam, and his daughter succumbed to the disease. Thereafter, his campaign to introduce vaccination to Siam took on a new urgency. He turned to the printing press to document his efforts and publicize his campaign. Bradley's *Treatise on Vaccination* was published in Bangkok in 1844 in an original press run of 500 copies.<sup>1</sup>

Bradley's treatise is at once distinctive and generic, recounting a local iteration of a global undertaking. Reading the treatise we are privy to the peculiar circumstances of the missionary-physician and his doubled efforts to spread both Western medicine and the gospel in a foreign land. The text reveals clues about the main challenges that Bradley envisioned his campaign would face, notably the supposition that Siamese bodies were fundamentally differently constituted than those of Westerners, and that Western medicine might therefore not be suitable.<sup>2</sup> The treatise also provides a record of Bradley's engagement with traditional Siamese medical practices and *materia medica*. It is therefore useful for considering the question to what extent did the practitioner of Western medicine seek out and recognize homologous therapeutics in indigenous traditions. In an era of rapid change in both Western and Siamese medicine, the treatise

<sup>1</sup> Dan Beach Bradley, ทำราบลูกฝีโคให้กันโรคครุพิศไม่ให้ขึ้นได้ *Thamra [sic: tamra] pluk fi kho hai kan rok thoraphit mai hai khun dai: Treatise on Vaccination Comprising a Narrative of the Introduction and Successful Propagation of Vaccina in Siam* (Bangkok: A.B.C.F.M. Press, 1844). The translation and reproduction of the title page were made from a copy held by the Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University, available through the Open Collections Program at: <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HMS.COUNT:1171575>.

<sup>2</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, Bradley seems to have understood that the fundamental cultural barrier to the practice of Western medicine in Siam was what he took to be the widespread belief among Siamese that the Siamese people were distinct from Westerners in their metaphysical constitution, and that Western medical remedies might therefore not be appropriate for Siamese bodies. Bradley addressed this more explicitly in his *Treatise on Midwifery* (1842); see Quentin Pearson, "Womb with a View": The Introduction of Western Obstetrics in Nineteenth-Century Siam," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 90, no. 1 (forthcoming, Spring 2016).

also bears closer scrutiny for what it might reveal about medical understanding of disease vectors in the era before the germ theory of disease. Bradley's efforts to describe the nature of both smallpox and cowpox as well as the operations of the vaccination procedure



seem to cohere with contemporary notions of communicable illness, in spite of his unequivocal commitment to a miasmatic theory of disease origination.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, Bradley's text is representative of a global campaign predicated on networks that included physicians, missionaries, bureaucrats, and kings, who were all allied in the effort to eradicate the scourge of smallpox. From this perspective, Bradley's treatise might be seen as but one entry in a genre of medical treatises inspired by Edward Jenner's own submission.<sup>4</sup> In their zeal, Jenner's acolytes evinced a cultish following that seemed to prefigure the work of another biomedical pioneer, Louis Pasteur (1822-1895).<sup>5</sup> And, like Pasteur, there is good reason to reconsider the work of the "Jennerians" in light of recent theoretical insights into the relations between science and society.<sup>6</sup> Even if Jennerian vaccination failed to alter the ontology of society in the same manner that Bruno Latour claims for Pasteur's discovery of the

microbe, it nevertheless provides important opportunities for evaluating the social nature of undertakings in medical science, specifically the nature of networks and discipline. Bradley's campaign was inevitably aimed at members of the Siamese elite,

<sup>3</sup> In what is the definitive study of the introduction of germ theory in Thai society, Davisakd Puaksom observed that although Bradley was committed to a miasmatic theory of disease, there is evidence in his early published works of the influence of contagionism; see his "Of Germs, Public Hygiene and the Healthy Body: The Making of the Medicalizing State in Thailand," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66(2) (2007): 311-344, 316.

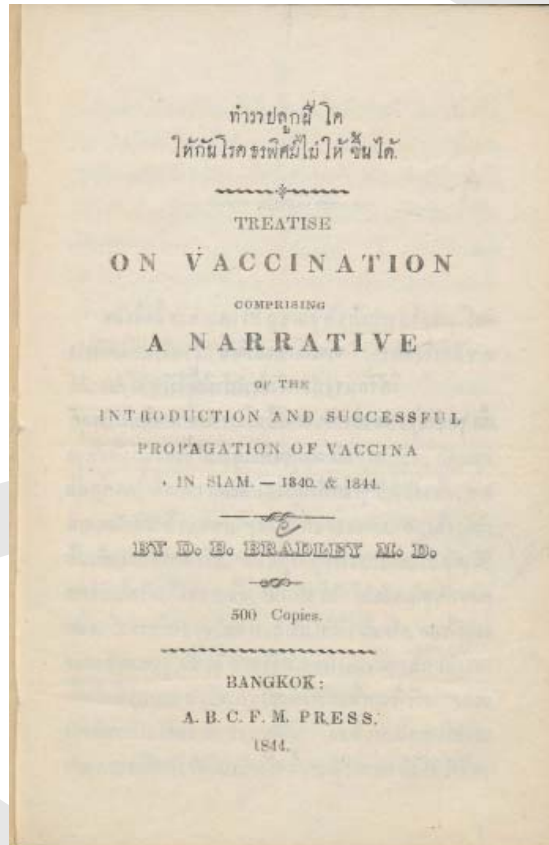
<sup>4</sup> Edward Jenner, *An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the variolae vaccinae* (London: Sampson Low, 1798).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Michael Bennett, "Passage Through India: Global Vaccination and British India, 1800-05," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35, no. 2 (2007): 201-220.

<sup>6</sup> Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

whose patronage he sought. He also had to enlist the aid of Siamese physicians if his campaign was to grow beyond the limited reach of his own two hands. But there are still other social implications that might be read into Bradley's text for those attentive to the agency of the cowpox lymph itself, which required careful mediation to survive the overseas journey to Siam.<sup>7</sup>

In the end, Bradley's campaign to eradicate smallpox in Siam was supplanted by the work of the Pasteurians. The efforts of missionary-physicians in the 19th century never fully took hold. Smallpox remained endemic in parts of Siam and deadly outbreaks continued until the waning years of the century.<sup>8</sup> The failure lay perhaps in his campaign's reliance on personal networks and individual humanitarian impulses: Bradley's charitable networks failed to ensure a constant supply of *vaccinae* matter, which had to be purchased from the United States at great expense.<sup>9</sup> It was not until the Pasteur Institute was established in Saigon in 1890, where vaccinia lymph was produced and distributed regionally at much lower cost, that true progress was made in eradicating the disease in Siam.<sup>10</sup>



Title page of the 1844 original, from a copy held by the Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University; see footnote 1.

## Treatise on Smallpox Vaccination

This book will demonstrate to both its readers and listeners alike how to deal with smallpox<sup>11</sup> in this land of the Thais, so that we can stop it from recurring in the future.

<sup>7</sup> See Michel Callon's formative sociological analysis of the creation of scientific knowledge in "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay" (1986, abridged 1998), chapter 5 in Mario Biagioli, ed. *The Science Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 67-83.

<sup>8</sup> Missionary Daniel McGilvary (1828-1911) testified to widespread deadly outbreaks in Northern Siam as late as 1884; see Donald R. Hopkins, *The Greatest Killer: Smallpox in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 153.

<sup>9</sup> Nipaporn Ratchatattanakul, "Public Health in Modern Siam: Elite Thinking, External Pressure, and Popular Attitudes," *Journal of the Siam Society* 101 (2013): 177-192, 180.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 180-182.

<sup>11</sup> *Rok Thoraphit* (โรคทรพิต). Elsewhere, Bradley (1873: 577) defines *rok* (โรค) as "*siap thaeng*,

Suppose the population of tigers was to increase rapidly. And they were to advance, becoming increasingly bold and without fear of humans, surrounding every village and precinct all over the kingdom, and attacking everyone in the family—fathers, mothers, and children—killing many thousands of people per year. How many people would wish to kill those tigers? Now, suppose there was one individual who possessed the means of capturing those vicious tigers and killing them, without any expense and without any repercussions at all—no injury, no pain, no death. If one could really capture them in this way, how many people from all over the land would come and beg that person to help them capture and destroy the tigers?

The tiger is an analogy, in that it is comparable to the viciousness of smallpox,<sup>12</sup> which takes human lives in even greater numbers than tigers. Those who are afflicted<sup>13</sup> with smallpox in this country suffer terrible pain and death at an annual rate that is hard to calculate. There are some who survive, but they suffer from various ailments as a result of the smallpox poison,<sup>14</sup> including losing function in their arms, atrophied legs, blindness, and growths in their chest and stomachs. Who can estimate the number of cases of such ailments? Smallpox appears in every house and home, [among people of ever ethnicity] including those of the Lao, Mon, Chinese, Yuan [Vietnamese], Thawai, and Thai. Some survive and some perish. No one can determine the real extent of the smallpox disease on the people of this land.

Therefore the question becomes: Isn't there some way to protect against the dangers of this disease? The answer is: yes, a powerful method exists for dealing with it effectively. It is a method that does not cost any money, and is not harmful in any way. Men, women, and even children can be treated easily with only one application, which will last throughout one's lifetime. It is a method that has been used by millions and millions of English and Americans, who have passed down the method for over forty-six years.<sup>15</sup> It is now customary in England and in all the countries of Europe and America to use only this method. On account of this, the smallpox disease has all but been eradicated in those countries, with only a few remaining traces.<sup>16</sup> But those who do

*khu mi khwam puai khai khun nai kai khon pen tan* [sic: *ton*] *nan*" (to stab and enter, meaning, for example, to have illness and develop a fever); *thoraphit* is defined as "the disease of smallpox" (*pen chuea rok fi dat nan*) (314); see Dan Beach Bradley, *Dictionary of the Siamese Language* (Bangkok, 1873), 577, 314.

<sup>12</sup> *Fi dat* (ฝีดาษ).

<sup>13</sup> *Khon thi pen fi dat*" (คนที่เป้นฝีดาษ).

<sup>14</sup> "*Phit fi dat*" (พิษฝีดาษ). There is some uncertainty in translating the term *phit* (พิษ). Following Rusnock, who notes that Jenner and his contemporaries understood cowpox lymph to be a "poison," I have followed that usage in translating Bradley's Thai term *phit*; see Andrea Rusnock, "Catching Cowpox: The Early Spread of Smallpox Vaccination, 1798-1810," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 83 (2009): 17-36, 20.

<sup>15</sup> See the Appendix for a complete chronology of the discovery and spread of vaccination based on Bradley's dates in this treatise.

<sup>16</sup> Here Bradley uses the Thai term *chuea* (เชื้อ), which would later be made to serve the function of the modern sense of 'disease' (*chuea rok*, เชื้อโรค) in the context of germ theory. But there is some ambiguity in Bradley's use of the term at this time (see Davisakd Puaksom, "Of Germs, Public Hygiene," 317). In his dictionary, Bradley does not define the term '*chuea*' in isolation; the definitions he offers pertain to the sense of a lineage or continuity of descent, as in the terms '*chuea*



not use this method in those countries still succumb to smallpox at times.

Among us American doctors<sup>17</sup> who have come to reside in this city of Ayutthaya [sic: Bangkok], we have all undergone this method of treatment prior to arriving in the city, with the exception of two people.<sup>18</sup> Although we arrived in this country during the [traditional] season of smallpox outbreaks, no one among us—man or woman—came down with smallpox at that time. And even though it is true that smallpox later appeared among some people in our families, the pox line<sup>19</sup> was not able to spread among us because we had already undergone the method of eliminating the trace of the pox line.<sup>20</sup> There was one doctor among us who had not undergone this method of treatment; he came down with smallpox and almost lost his life. Another doctor, while living in that foreign land [America] as a young child, received an injection of smallpox effluvia<sup>21</sup> by his father. That doctor was none other than myself. My father treated me with injections because there was a traveler who came down with smallpox in the midst of his journey and who had to stop and stay in the area near my father's house. People in the village were very afraid, so they went in search of all kinds of ways<sup>22</sup> of protecting themselves from the disease, but they were unable to find one. So in the end it was necessary to perform the method of injecting pus<sup>23</sup> directly from the smallpox.

Approximately four years ago I brought this method of using [cowpox] effluvia<sup>24</sup> from America, when doctors from abroad sent it to me. When I received the shipment, I first used it to treat the children of the American doctors. Next, I went to the residence of the Siamese Minister of Finance, where I used it to protect his own children and retainers numbering about fifty or sixty, as well as many more at the palace of Prince Itsaretrangsang, plus another forty or fifty people at the French Consulate. Among those

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wong,' *'chuea kasat,' 'chuea krakul* [sic: *trakul*], *'chuea phra wong,'* and *'chuea sai*'; Bradley, *Dictionary*, 188). It is obvious from Bradley's use of the term, which approximates something like 'traces' or 'remnants,' in close proximity to smallpox, *rok thoraphit*, that the terms must have already been semantically linked in the Siamese vocabulary.

<sup>17</sup> Bradley refers to his traveling party as a community of American doctors, *puak mo amerika*, not missionaries or clerics.

<sup>18</sup> The Thai here is somewhat obscure.

<sup>19</sup> *Chuea fi* (เชื้อฝี).

<sup>20</sup> *Chuea fi nan ko mi dai tit to pai dai het duai dai chai withi thi tat fi dat sia mai mi chuea laeo* (เชื้อฝินันก็มีติดต่อกันไปได้ เหตุด้วยได้ใช้วิธีที่ติดฝีดาษเสียไม่มีเชื้อแล้ว).

<sup>21</sup> Here Bradley uses the term *phan phi dat* (พันธุ์ดาษ). Although Bradley uses the term "to inject" (*pluk*, ปู๊ด), he is almost certainly describing the process of variolation, which involved inserting smallpox matter under the skin.

<sup>22</sup> *Phan withi* (พันธุ์วิธี). Here Bradley's use of the term "phan" is clearly meant to suggest kinds or types of ways for protecting against the disease (จะกันได้).

<sup>23</sup> *Buppho* (บุบผ). This time the description more clearly fits the older tradition of variolation, in which pus from a smallpox sore is used to spread the disease in the hopes of encouraging an attenuated form of infection that would nevertheless confer immunity. In this case it appears that pus was extracted from a pox on the stricken traveler and was then administered to the young Bradley (likely through a scratch on the surface of his skin).

<sup>24</sup> *Withi phan* (วิธีพันธุ์). Bradley's terminology is somewhat in doubt here; I have followed Jenner's use of the term "effluvia"; see Jenner, *An Inquiry into the Causes*.

who have received the true method of protection,<sup>25</sup> not a single one has come down with smallpox up to the present time. But this method [sic: strain], which comes from abroad, can only be used for three or four months before it runs out.

I therefore sent letters abroad to many different cities asking them to send cowpox effluvia.<sup>26</sup> Foreign doctors sent it to me on several occasions, but the matter had spoiled on the long journey, and it was therefore not effective.<sup>27</sup> Then during the second month in the year of the Tiger,<sup>28</sup> one of my own daughters became ill with smallpox fever, and after suffering for about nineteen days, she passed away. For lack of cowpox effluvia with which to protect her, I lost my own daughter. On account of this, I understand all too well how much parents worry about their children who have not yet been infected with smallpox.<sup>29</sup> I therefore sent more letters to foreign doctors abroad asking them to send cowpox effluvia. I then received the effluvia from many foreign places, but it was ineffective, having spoiled in transit. Afterward, I received effective cowpox effluvia from America in July 1843. I used that strain with very good results. And today there is enough cowpox effluvia for every person in the Thai kingdom who would like to use it. I have great compassion for all children, especially those who have not yet been infected with smallpox, fearing that they will become feverish on account of an outbreak of smallpox. For all of these reasons, I have printed this book explaining in detail this powerful method of protecting against smallpox, so that all people will understand and abandon their suspicions, and in order to make the method readily available, at no cost whatsoever. I will now offer a detailed and straightforward description of this method of protecting against smallpox.

The method involves a type of pus that originates in the udder of a female cow, and that pus, which is taken from the pox of a female cow, is then injected into a person who has not yet been infected with smallpox. In order to inject it, one takes a blade and makes a small puncture, then allow the pus to flow down under the surface of the skin along the tip of the blade. The pain at the moment of the injection is no more than being bitten by a mosquito. Then, two or three days later, the area will redden. After eight days it will rise up into a small bump that discharges pus. After eleven to thirteen days have passed, it will subside and dry out by itself. There is no need to take any kind of medicine. If nineteen or twenty people are injected at once, there is a small chance of perhaps one person coming down with a fever. But even in that case, there is no need to

<sup>25</sup> *Withi pong-kan pen thae laeo* (วิธีป้องกันเป็นแท่นแล้ว). This is the first hint of the distinction between “true” and “spurious” or ineffective strains of pox, which was a crucial one for a physician hoping to demonstrate the universal efficacy of variolation/vaccination (see discussion below).

<sup>26</sup> *Phan withi* (พันวิธี). Bradley uses this term to refer to the actual strain of pox that was used in inoculation/vaccination, which is distinct from the “method of using the strain” (*withi phan*, วิธีพัน).

<sup>27</sup> *Tham mai tid loei* (ซึ่งทำไม่ติดเลย).

<sup>28</sup> January 1843. There seems to be an error in Bradley’s use of the lunar calendar here, as Bradley’s own diary notes that his daughter passed away in December 1842 (Bradley, Dan Beach, 1804-1873, *Papers, 1800-1991*, Diary, Vol. 8, Oberlin College Archives).

<sup>29</sup> *But thi yang mai dai pen khai thoraphit* (บุตรที่ยังไม่ได้เป็นไข้ทรพิษ). I use the term “infected” advisedly here. I initially avoided the term due to its connections with the germ theory of disease, but Jenner himself uses the term “infected” in his treatise on vaccination, which must have been well known to Bradley.

take medicine or abstain from certain foods.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, this method protects against smallpox with great certainty. If one wants to continue with the injections, they should take the pus that that was injected and that has risen to the surface again, and inject it into another person, and continue in this way. It can be passed on in this way thousands of times without ever turning into smallpox or any other sort of dangerous condition. That which we call cowpox effluvia can be used in this way. I will now describe the discovery of this method.

About fifty years ago, a preeminent English doctor named Jenner observed that among people who milk dairy cows on a daily basis almost none are infected with smallpox. He therefore investigated those people and realized that they would only bear pox on their hands, apparently as a result of the poison in the pox on the cow's udders. Dr. Jenner then reflected with insight that the pox on a cow's udder might very well protect against smallpox. The English doctor then extracted pus from the pox on the cow's udder, and injected it in several people. And [in those people] pox appeared, which produced pus and then quickly healed. He then extracted smallpox pus and injected it into those people who had been injected with cowpox. Smallpox did not arise, and he therefore concluded that this method could effectively protect against smallpox.

Jenner then reflected further, observing that the pox on a cow's udder actually came from the pox disease that first appeared on horses' feet. Initially, the horsepox appeared on the foot above the hoof and the pus was sticky. Then, after the horses and cows mingled together, it appeared that the pus from the horse's foot entered into the female cows and produced pox. Jenner developed yet another hypothesis: The pox on the cow's udder might be induced in cows by human smallpox. When it appeared on the cow, the pox did not appear all over; instead it became a benign variety of pox that no longer bore any toxin.<sup>31</sup> When Jenner took the pus from that cow and injected it into people only one or two pox appeared; and even though the pox did not develop fully, it was nevertheless sufficient to convey immunity against smallpox.

Thus Dr. Jenner recognized two distinct causes of cowpox: The pox on a horse was one type, and the pox that appeared on people was another type. In spite of this, however, he remained unsure about the causes of each. But over the last eight or nine years, English and American doctors have realized with certainty that the pox on a cow's udder can protect against smallpox when injected into a person because cows are afflicted with smallpox. That is how cows get pox. Doctors now understand this because they extracted pus from human smallpox and injected it into a cow, and they observed that only one pox appeared exactly as Dr. Jenner first observed on the cow's udder back then. Those English and American doctors then took the pox that they had injected into the cow's udder and injected it into people. Only one or two pox appeared on those people and they were protected against smallpox just as surely as in Dr. Jenner's original experiment. But taking smallpox pus from a person and injecting it into a cow is very difficult to accomplish. If you inject twenty to thirty cows, you will likely get only one successful transfer.

<sup>30</sup> A reference to the traditional Thai medicinal practice of identifying and avoiding certain foods thought to aggravate a medical condition (*khong salaeng*, ขອງแสลง).

<sup>31</sup> *Phet fi di mai mi phit ik* (เพ็ดผีดีไม่มีพิษมีอีก).

When I arrived in Bangkok, I and other foreign doctors did not yet know that pus produced by smallpox could be injected into cows to produce cowpox. For the last forty-six years, since the time when Jenner first realized that cowpox could protect against smallpox, doctors everywhere have had to search for naturally occurring strains of cowpox. When I first came to reside in this land, I brought a strain of cowpox with me, and injected it into the people of this land, but to no avail. I therefore started sending letters abroad and was able to obtain some cowpox pus from America and England. I injected it into many people on many different occasions, but I found that it did not produce any pox. And then, in the year 1200 [1838] there was a widespread outbreak of smallpox in the vicinity of the residence of the American doctors.<sup>32</sup> I was fearful that this disease might spread and become a danger to my children, so I searched for cowpox pus to establish a reserve for injection, but I was unable to find it. Myself and the other doctors then consulted together and decided that if the smallpox spread according to its natural course, it was likely to be fierce and have a great deal of dangerous toxins.

If, however, we were to use smallpox pus itself for injections, then it would not have the same degree of dangerous toxins.<sup>33</sup> This is because when you are injected with smallpox matter, there is a period of eight or nine days before the pox will appear, and during that time you can take care to abstain from all kinds of substances that would irritate the condition.<sup>34</sup> And after having abstained for eight or nine days, you can take medicines to purge the toxins [from your body].<sup>35</sup> With this method, pox will take root nicely and with less toxins. I, Dr. Bradley, and the other American doctors, after having reflected on these facts, injected smallpox pus into our children, servants, and hired laborers. The result was good: The pox took hold and did not contain dangerous toxins at all. This great news reached the exalted king, who graciously ordered the royal physicians to learn the method from the American doctors, and administer it to the religious ascetics [Buddhist monks], the children of major and minor civil servants, and then the population at large. In all these cases the pox took hold nicely and rarely contained dangerous toxins. During the hot season, however, smallpox was somewhat fierce and contained more toxins. And since we had taken a strain of smallpox and injected it in people—not a strain of cowpox—it therefore contained some dangerous toxins. If the strain had come from real cowpox, then it would not have had any dangerous toxins at all. But we doctors were forced to use smallpox because we simply could not find cowpox at that time. Since that time, I have been sending letters abroad requesting them to send me true cowpox effluvia.

<sup>32</sup> Bradley does not refer to his congregation as a missionary community per se. In this case, the outbreak occurred “next to my home among the community of Americans” (*rim ban khaphajao phuak mo amerika*).

<sup>33</sup> Here Bradley is simply explaining the difference between allowing a disease to take its course, and the interventionist measure of variolation.

<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the passage above, Bradley here explicitly advocates following the traditional Thai medical practice of avoiding certain foods that were thought to be irritants capable of aggravating a particular medical condition. This is an interesting instance of the coincidence of traditional Thai and Western homeopathic traditions.

<sup>35</sup> Another direct reference to traditional Thai medical practices, which involved the use of purgatives to cleanse the system of harmful substances.



Foreign doctors have received my letters and have sent cowpox effluvia from Kwantung [Guangdong, China], Macao, Singapore, Penang, and America. Upon receiving that cowpox pus, I have injected many people on many occasions, and for the most part no pox have appeared. In some cases, pox have appeared, but they were not true pox.<sup>36</sup> Then in the second month of the year of the pig [February 1840], a doctor in the city of Boston, in America, named Smith learned of my ardent wish to obtain cowpox pus. Smith set out in search of cowpox pus and sent it to me in the care of another American doctor who was on his way to Siam that same month. I notified the Siamese Minister of Finance, and he allowed me to use that cowpox to inject four or five of his children and more than sixty people among the resident *Chaloei* community.<sup>37</sup> I then used it to inject my own children, the children of Dr. Robinson, and a group of Thai children who lived nearby. In total, I was able to inject about seventy-five people with the cowpox that I received from America, but the injection took hold in only five people because the pus had spoiled during the long journey. Those five people included four *Chaloei* people and one of Dr. Robinson's children. But those four *Chaloei* people were already afflicted with scabies, frambesia (or yaws) growths, and many other diseases.<sup>38</sup> I was afraid that it would not be a good idea if I used them as a source of pox to inject on to others.

Instead, I decided to take that pus and test it in about twenty other people within the *Chaloei* community. Every one of them showed pox, but the head of the pox appeared to be the type that could not protect against smallpox<sup>39</sup> because the original host<sup>40</sup> of the pox was afflicted with other diseases. These complications<sup>41</sup> changed the cowpox into an abnormal state. The child of Dr. Robinson, however, was not afflicted with any other disease so I extracted pus from the pox of that child and injected it into my own children, a female friend of mine, and one Thai child. All three showed genuine pox. I therefore took that strain of pus and injected it into a group of four or five more children at the request of the Minister of Finance, five people at the request of Prince Mongkut,<sup>42</sup> and Prince Itsaretrangsana<sup>43</sup> had me inject one young prince. Four or five of those who were injected at that time did not develop pox, but most did, and they developed proper pox<sup>44</sup> [that signaled effective immunity]. I therefore decided to continue using that strain to inject others. The next month the Minister of Finance allowed me to inject three more of

<sup>36</sup> *Tae fi nan mai thae* (แต่ผีนั้นไม่แท้).

<sup>37</sup> *Khaek chaloei* (แขกชะเลย). An apparent reference to a community of foreign residents residing in Siam at the time (perhaps war captives).

<sup>38</sup> *Pen rok hit lae mareng khotcharat rok lai yang* (เป็นโรคฮิตแล่มะเร็งคอชราช, โรคหลายอย่าง).

<sup>39</sup> Bradley used a visible inspection of the "heads" of the pox to determine whether or not the transfer had been successful and immunity had been conferred.

<sup>40</sup> *Jao khong* (เจ้าของผีนั้น); lit. "the owner" of the pox.

<sup>41</sup> *Rok uen saek yu* (โรคอื่นแทรกอยู่) refers to the presence of other underlying diseases that complicate the gestation of the pox and the development of immunity.

<sup>42</sup> Prince Mongkut, the future King Rama IV (r. 1851-1868), was an ordained monk at the time, and head of his own monastic reform movement, the Thammayut Nikai.

<sup>43</sup> Mongkut's younger brother, who would be appointed heir-apparent during the Fourth Reign under the title Phra Pin Klao.

<sup>44</sup> *Ngam nak* (งามนัก).

his children. All three developed proper pox.<sup>45</sup> Since then, I have continued to use that strain of pus, taking care to perpetuate it by injecting it in others every eight days. I have already passed it on fifteen times.<sup>46</sup>

During the fourth month of the year of the pig [February 1840], a royal physician came to study this technique and brought a child with him for an injection. Then, that physician led me to the palace of Chao Nuam,<sup>47</sup> who requested that we inject two of his children and five or six of his retainers. Among those whom we injected, five or six produced proper pox, but two or three did not. I then injected about ten or fifteen people at the residence of Luang Surasadon. At around that time, a physician named Suk, who was among the retainers of the Minister of Finance, had had a chance to study the method of injection; he went on to inject another fifty or sixty people [on his own]. Doctor Suk told another royal physician that those who have undergone the method of injection would not succumb to smallpox even if they happened to mix with and reside among those who are afflicted. Some time later, during the waning phase of the fifth lunar month [April 1840], I went to inject four or five people at the home of Luang Nai. Pox did not develop, however, because the pus had already spoiled. I cannot be sure whether it spoiled because we had entered into the severe heat of the hot season or for some other reason, but since then that strain of pus had become ineffective. I mourned this loss, and began sending letters to doctors in America requesting that they kindly send me more pus. Moreover, I requested that the pus arrive at the start of the dry season each and every year. I would then try to inject this pox, which protects against smallpox, into the population every year in order that it should be a boon to this great city.

When my friends and acquaintances in America, Bombay, Kwantung, and Macau, responded and sent pus from cows to me, however, I conducted a trial injection and found that it did not produce pox. Around that time, a doctor in America sent a letter telling me that if I needed cow pus, there was no reason at all to import it from abroad. Instead, he suggested that it was possible to procure it in the land of the Thais. Doctors in England and America had recently discovered that if you took smallpox and injected it into a cow, it would produce cowpox that is the very same as the pus that naturally occurs in cows. The resulting pox that appeared in the cows was capable of protecting against smallpox and was not dangerous in the least.

When I heard the news, I wrote about this way of obtaining pus to the Minister of Finance so that the king might be informed. The king then ordered the high official in charge of cattle<sup>48</sup> to help inject a number of cows [with human smallpox] in the second

<sup>45</sup> *Fi khun ngam di* (ฝึ้นงามดี).

<sup>46</sup> I understand Bradley to mean that he was working with eight-day cycles of development and that he had been through fifteen cycles as of the time of writing. This same practice of timing injections and outbreaks in vectors had been successfully used to spread cowpox across the Pacific Ocean; see Catherine Mark and José G. Rigau-Pérez, "The World's First Immunization Campaign: The Spanish Smallpox Vaccine Expedition, 1803-1813," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 83 (2009): 63-94.

<sup>47</sup> *Phra ong jao Nuam* (พระองค์เจ้านวน).

<sup>48</sup> This seems to refer to a specific bureaucratic rank (*khun kho*, ขุนโค).

month of the year of the rat [January 1841]. Unfortunately, the injections did not take hold in those cows.

Then in the first month of the year of the tiger [December 1842] there was a fierce outbreak of smallpox, so I took the smallpox pus from the outbreak and injected it into many more cows on many occasions. I hoped that it would produce cowpox pus that could be used to protect against smallpox. But again, cowpox failed to appear in even a single cow. Since I was unable to obtain cowpox pus at that time, I was forced to take smallpox pus and inject it into the children in our community of doctors. At the time when I still injecting the children of the other doctors, my own daughter, whom I was not able to inject in time, became afflicted with smallpox in the natural course<sup>49</sup> and died.

After I had lost my own daughter for want of cowpox pus that would protect against smallpox, I became fixated on cowpox pus 100 times more intently than before. My heart was full of compassion and sympathy for all the children of this land who were still at risk of being infected by smallpox. I wished to protect them by injecting them with pus from cowpox. I therefore sent many more letters abroad urgently and emphatically requesting cowpox pus be sent to me. In my letters, I explained that the strains of pus that they had sent to me in the past had all spoiled because they were exposed to air and humidity.<sup>50</sup> So from then on, I instructed them to take the scabs from cowpox<sup>51</sup> and place them inside a small glass jar, then close the mouth of the jar securely with sealing wax in order to keep out air and humidity. I then instructed them to drill holes in a piece of wood wide enough to fit those glass jars, and place the glass jars containing the cowpox matter into the holes. Secure the mouth of the jars tightly again with sealing wax.

One American doctor followed the instructions and sent me the material in just this manner. The package was in transit for six months, taking an extra month to reach me [after reaching Siam?], which amounted to seven months of total time in transit. It was shipped aboard the vessel of Mr. Hunter,<sup>52</sup> which arrived during the eighth month of that year [July 1843]. I removed three scabs from the jars, there were many left and they all remained properly closed as they had from before. I used just enough cow's milk to dissolve the three scabs, to make them moist, yielding a thick liquid. I then took the liquid and injected it into about seven or eight children. I then waited for eight days. After eight days, I noticed that there were no pox; they had all dried up already. I then mixed rain water with the remaining scabs and injected the liquid again in the same seven or eight children as before. This time pox appeared in only one Chinese child. Eight days after the injection, however, the pox progressed sufficiently to produce an outflow of clear pus. I then extracted the pus, and injected in into one of my own children, the child of another doctor in my community, as well as a number of Chinese and Thai children. I waited eight days and observed that the injections produced pox in each and every child. I therefore continued to extract the pus and inject it in dozens of

<sup>49</sup> *Ok fi dat tam thamada* (ออกฝีดาษตามธรรมดา).

<sup>50</sup> *Sia pai sin phrao thuk lom lae ai nam nan* (เสียไปสิ้นเพราะถูกลมแลอายน้ำนั้น).

<sup>51</sup> *Saket fi phan fi kho* (เสกฝีพันฝิโค).

<sup>52</sup> As I have noted elsewhere, the cargo evidently arrived on a ship owned (or leased?) by the British merchant Robert Hunter, who was a long-time resident in Bangkok and who owed his vibrant import business to his affiliations with the crown; see Pearson, "Prefiguring Pasteurization," 13.

others and I continue to do so to this day. If anyone wishes to receive the injection let them be injected with this strain of pus. This is a batch of pox that has been taken from people and that can be used to inject others.

I will now describe the first symptoms of cowpox in detail. After placing the pox underneath the surface of the skin, there are no clear effects for two days until on the third day you will observe redness at the site of the original incision, and bumps will begin to rise up around the edges of the area. The spots that appear will be very small and difficult to notice; you will have to use a magnifying lens in order to see them clearly. Then, after five days, the swollen bumps will be seen clearly, and the pox will begin to come to a head. Around the base of that pox mark, redness and swelling will appear noticeably greater than the surrounding normal flesh. The center of the pox will begin to darken, more so than the color of the pus in the surrounding pox. On the sixth, seventh, and eighth days counting from the day of injection, the base of the pox mark will begin to expand, but the tip of the pox will remain flat, since the pus is not yet fully developed.<sup>53</sup> Then, after ten or eleven days, the pox mark will come to a head because the pus will have fully developed. The base of the pox will be red and will expand even more. The redness around the base will become firmer as the pox progresses. On the tenth or eleventh day, some people will have a slight fever, while others will have no fever whatsoever. Some people will experience pain in the armpit, while others will have no pain. Some people will develop pox marks only at the site of injection, and not elsewhere. In some people, only six to eight bumps will develop outside of the site of the injection. Cases such as this do occur, but they are few and far between.

On the eleventh or twelfth day the pox mark will begin to dry out, giving way to a scab. By the fourteenth day, the whole pox, including the head, will have vanished into a scab. That scab will then dry out and darken, with a different color from other types of pox. Sometimes it can take fifteen, sixteen, or even seventeen days for the scab to peel off. Sometimes it will even remain for twenty days before peeling off. Pox scabs in this country peel off more quickly than in foreign lands because it is warmer here than in foreign countries, and because people in this country do not wear shirts, so the scabs tend to peel more quickly. When the scab has peeled off and healed well, the scar will be uneven. Some marks will be raised and some will be depressed. In the immediate area of the sore, the skin will be calloused and not as soft as normal skin.

Doctors should take notice of the development of the pox from the first raising of the skin to the development of a bump and the hardening of the pus, until it becomes a scab, and finally, until that scab peels off. If the course of the pox develops as such, then it will protect against smallpox. Pox that develop with these characteristics are the most common, though in some cases the symptoms that develop will deviate in some small way. For instance, there are cases when pox develop rapidly, filling with pus, the red area around the base becoming firm only six or seven days from the day of the injection. In other cases, there will be no reaction after the injection for five or six days before the area turns red and a bump appears. In some cases only two or three bumps will appear outside the area of injection. But pox with these kinds of symptoms, which

<sup>53</sup> *Buppho yang mai boribun* (บุพโพยังไมบรื้บรรณ).



appear outside of the area of injection, only occur in one or two people out of 100.

In order to be sure that it is genuine cowpox,<sup>54</sup> a bump must appear and symptoms as described above must follow two or three days after the injection. In that case it can be accepted to be genuine cowpox. But if someone is injected and bumps appear after only one day, do not rush to judgment, as one cannot be certain. Have a physician carefully inspect it in order to know for sure.

### Reasons why pus spoils

Even genuine cowpox is capable of spoiling for a number of reasons. One reason is that the pus was not properly stored, exposing it to air and sunlight. Another reason why a strain of cowpox might spoil is that the person from whom it was taken scratched and damaged the site of the injection, and then treated the area with other medicine, such as applying turmeric to the wound.<sup>55</sup> If the pus was taken from a sore that was too old, this is another reason why the cowpox might spoil. Sometimes if a child is already afflicted with sores on their body before injection, those sores will cause the pox fluid that was injected to spoil. If the person is already afflicted by frambesia (yaws) or other skin diseases such as scabies or ringworm,<sup>56</sup> these conditions are also likely to affect the pox and make it spoil. The pox that appear in these people, if any, will sometimes protect against smallpox and sometimes will not. One will have to inject again to be sure. And even though genuine pox might appear in a child who is afflicted with some prior disease, you will not be able to take pus from that child and inject it into other children because that strain is not pure.<sup>57</sup>

About six or seven years ago, I received cow pus that was sent from Kwantung. A foreign doctor soaked a piece of thread in cow pus [as the medium for the strain] and then placed it in a jar and sent it to me.<sup>58</sup> I then cut a small piece of that thread, which had been soaked in cow pus, and used it to inject people at the palace of Prince Itsaretrangsang, and it produced pox. I then created a strain from that pus to inject into a community of foreigners,<sup>59</sup> each of whom showed pox. But I did not trust that strain since it arrived attached to the piece of thread. When I injected it, I had to do it by inserting the string underneath the surface of the skin, and I noticed that pox developed more quickly than usual. I was therefore dubious [that this pus was real cowpox], so I took smallpox pus and injected it into those people whom I had already treated with that strain of cowpox. Each and every one of them developed smallpox. I therefore knew that this strain of cowpox did not protect against smallpox, so I informed those people [who had been injected with it] not to trust this strain to protect them against smallpox. But

<sup>54</sup> *Tha ja ao pen thae wa pen fi kho laeo* (ถ้าจะเอาเบ็นแท้ว่าเปบฝีโคแล้ว).

<sup>55</sup> *Khamin* (ขมิ้น; sic: ขมิ้น), turmeric, was apparently used to treat open wounds in addition to other medicinal applications.

<sup>56</sup> *Khi klak* (ขี้กลาก).

<sup>57</sup> *Phrao phan nan mai borisut* (เพราะพันนั้นไม่บริสุทธิ์).

<sup>58</sup> C.f. Jenner's discussion of the use of a similar medium for preserving smallpox for use in inoculation ("An Inquiry into the Causes," 73).

<sup>59</sup> *Khaek* (แขก).

those foreigners already believed that the injection would protect them. When smallpox season arrived, the young children of those foreigners came down with smallpox. They all blamed me, claiming that the cowpox does not protect against smallpox. They then disparaged the method of injecting cowpox, even though I had warned them not to trust in the injection [they had received]. Now no one has much faith in the method of injecting cowpox, for the simple reason that the strain of cowpox we injected that one time was not effective. People spread the word that that they were injected but it did not protect them against smallpox. Then they lie and blame me, claiming that because I injected them they were afflicted with a form of smallpox that was even more severe. They do not see that in fact I was trying to provide a beneficial service to them. All of this happened because that strain was created from the cowpox that was put on a piece of thread, which caused it to spoil. This rumor that spread around has had a damaging effect up to the present day. I therefore advise all doctors to be careful in dealing with the injection in order to be certain that the cowpox is genuine and that it will protect against smallpox without any doubt.

There have been other instances when I have taken pus and injected it into several hundred more people, and no pox developed. On each occasion, I told them not to trust it because the pox did not appear. Yet they refused to believe me. They trust that the injection was successful because they saw redness and a small bump appear at the site of the injection. But then when the smallpox season comes around, they are afflicted with smallpox. Then they blame me, saying, "you injected me, but it did not work." Among those people whom I injected at that time and in whom no pox appeared, afterwards some of them succumbed to smallpox and died, just as those who had been injected. The friends and family of these people blamed me, claiming that the pox were only dangerous on account of the poisons that I had injected in them earlier. Even though only one person in fifty among those whom the injection proved to be ineffective actually died of smallpox, they still gossip and lay the blame on me, claiming that because of my injection these people died of smallpox. All those who hear this are therefore unlikely to put their trust in injections any more. I am asking for your careful consideration with respect to my actions so far: have I come to this land in order to do beneficial service, or to harm the people? Consider the case of doctors who care for other diseases, such as in a child who is not yet afflicted with smallpox. If that child should later develop smallpox, why do people not blame that doctor who had previously treated that child with medicine? Why do they not blame the poisons in that doctor's medicine, which remain in the child's system? Why then do people blame only me in this manner?

Let all doctors who would take a strain of cowpox and pass it from person to person therefore carefully inspect and be absolutely certain before using it. If someone is not diligent and mindful, the strain will spoil and it will no longer be effective in preventing against smallpox. But most doctors do not pay close attention to the details; they deal with it in a cursory manner.

[For the benefit of those doctors,] I will now describe again the symptoms of pox that will protect against smallpox, and those of pox that will not. I will present them together side by side so that it will be easy to distinguish between them. If it is genuine cowpox there will not be any reaction after injection until the third day, when you will

notice bumps starting to rise. But if it is spurious pox, pus will form a head only one or two days after injection.<sup>60</sup> If it is genuine cowpox, after the first appearance of redness at the sight of injection on the third day, it will continue to develop until the seventh or eighth day, until the eleventh day counting from the day of injection, when the pox will begin to subside day by day. Spurious pox develop more quickly and begin to subside after only five days. Genuine cowpox will begin to gather into a circle and form a center on the fifth or sixth day after the injection, but the base around the pox will still not swell up. Spurious pox will produce a pointed head and the base will swell quickly, resembling the infected wound of a splinter; they will produce pus after two or three days, but that puss will not drain. In the case of genuine cowpox, on the other hand, after four or five days pus will develop and clear liquid will emerge. Spurious pox will produce yellowish pus. Genuine cowpox rises after four or five days into a head that is a pale whitish color. If the head is too white, however, you still cannot be sure that it is genuine cowpox. Likewise, if the sore is very flat, you cannot be certain that it is genuine cowpox either. If after a sore develops in four or five days, the base area next to the surrounding flesh [on the edge of the injection area] hardens excessively, then it is not genuine cowpox.

For these reasons, it is necessary that all doctors inspect the injection site carefully in order to determine with certainty whether it is genuine or spurious pox. When a doctor plans to take the lymph from one individual and use it as a source to inject others, he must inspect it closely first in order to ensure that it will protect against smallpox. After transferring it to another child, and following the time schedule for pox to develop, the child who was injected should be brought in to be evaluated to determine whether the cowpox is genuine or not. Let the doctor inspect very carefully first, and if it is genuine cowpox then tell the patient that it is so; but if the doctor is suspicious, then tell them that you suspect that it is not genuine cowpox. This way, one will not endanger the child. And nor will you give the people a reason to criticize doctors. Both the patient and the doctor must be in agreement. If it is necessary to inject again, then the doctor should inject again. This will be a boon to the patient and will be beneficial to the doctor himself. Finally, do not give them a reason to gossip to others about us doctors who work ‘our fingers to the bone’ to benefit all, protecting those people who have not yet been afflicted from succumbing to smallpox.

### On the best time to extract pus

If one is going to create a strain of cowpox that can be used to inject in others, the best time to extract it is on the sixth or seventh day from the day that the pox first appears. In order to extract the pox strain, use a needle or the edge of a knife and carefully pierce the lowest part of the base of the pox. Do not pierce the hard center inside the sore. Insert the needle or knife edge into several different places in order to let the clear pus flow out. Then with a thin, sharp, and pointed feather scrape only the clearest pus.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Genuine’ versus ‘spurious’ lymph seems to have been the accepted terminology to distinguish between true cowpox (i.e. that which would provide immunity to smallpox) and false (that which would not); see Michael Bennett, “Passage through India: Global Vaccination and British India, 1800-1805,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35:2 (2007): 201-20, 204.

Do not allow any blood to mix in with it. After you have collected the pus, set it aside to dry. Then seal it tightly in a jar. Do not let any air enter into it. Take a piece of wood and drill holes in it large enough to place the jar inside the holes in the wood. Then close the holes tightly with cotton. If you follow these instructions, then no matter where you have to take the lymph, the humidity in your hands will not touch those jars containing pus. And even if you have to take the pus and travel to a distant city, the pus will not spoil and it will continue to serve as a reserve for a long time to come.

### Instructions for injection

If a doctor intends to inject pox using pus, they should take hold of the patient's arm with their hand and pull the skin tight. Then use the end of a knife that is sharp like the leaf of a rice plant to make a light cut just under the surface of the skin. When blood begins to seep out, apply the pus taken from the jar with the sharp end of a feather. Place the sharp end of the feather into the knife wound. Allow the blood to mix together with the pus on the end of the feather above the site of injection. Leave the tip of the feather in place in the wound for eight to ten minutes. Inject the patient in this way in two or three places just in case the first injection site does not produce a sore, the other sites will. After you have inserted the pus in this manner, gradually remove the feather from the sore and apply Wood Apple resin<sup>61</sup> over silk cloth to dress the wound. Then use white cloth to cover the area directly over the wound for two days, taking care not to let any water into the site of injection. If after two days the sore does not begin to rise, then repeat the injection according to the method described above.

If fresh lymph is not available, then it is necessary to use dried lymph as mentioned above. If fresh lymph is available—that is, after an injection has taken and sores arise that contain pus and are well formed—then puncture it using a needle or the end of a knife and transfer the pus to the tip of a knife. After the blood and pus have mixed together well, use Wood Apple resin to close the wound again. Injections using fresh pus will succeed more often and will transfer more rapidly [than those using dry lymph]. In order to inject using fresh pus, carefully take the end of a knife and scratch [the skin]. When blood seeps out, blot it, leaving just enough to mix with the pus. If blood rushes out of the wound excessively, it will wash away the pus, which will then not transfer to the surface of the skin and will not produce pox, just as if it were washed away by water.

### How to care for cases when the injected pox contains poisons

When pox are injected at one time into nineteen or twenty people, it is likely that there will be but one person who becomes feverish and sometimes their arm will become inflamed and will swell and become painful. In such cases, boil rice over the fire until it becomes tender, then plaster it directly over the sore and the site of the swelling. This will quickly draw the lymph out and the pain will subside. Change the plaster covering three times per day, and the pain and swelling will subside. If the injection

<sup>61</sup> *Yang makhwit* (ยางมะขวิด).



produces a very high fever, give the patient Epsom salt<sup>62</sup> dissolved in warm water to drink. The patient will pass the poisons out and the fever will subside. In the case of a child, give them three *salueng*'s weight [worth of Epsom salt]. In the case of an adult, administer the Epsom salt according to their constitution, whether light or heavy, so that they will pass the poisons.<sup>63</sup> In cases when the pox sores covered in the boiled rice plaster continue to produce pus, dissolve *junnasi*<sup>64</sup> in water and daub it onto the sore. Then take one part hardened bee's wax and two parts coconut oil, boil them together to mix them well, and then apply it with white cloth to close the sore. Change the bee's wax dressing twice a day and the sore will heal.

On some occasions someone might approach you and ask with suspicion whether these pox that were injected, scabbed over, and dried of pus can really protect against smallpox for life in every person, or whether in some cases it might not. You should answer that in the case of genuine cowpox according to the exact characteristics described above, when injected at one time in 100 people, it might fail to protect just a single person. Just as in people who have already succumbed to smallpox but who nevertheless have another outbreak, such exceptions do occur, but they are very rare. In 200 people, there will only be one such case. When one injects genuine cowpox, even if some of the pox that develop contain poisons, these are usually few and they are not at all dangerous. Thus, with cowpox, the rate [of those who become infected later in life] is the same as that of those who have been afflicted with smallpox. Smallpox, in a person who has been injected thus, is like a fire ignited in a place soaked with water. There is nowhere for the fire to take hold.

Nevertheless, people continue to wish that there were some way to know for certain whether cowpox would protect against smallpox for one's entire life or not. You should answer that there is no way to be certain whether it will protect for all of one's life or not. In the case of cowpox, we know for certain that it can protect against smallpox for at least forty-six years. However, it seems probable that it can in fact protect against smallpox for one's entire lifetime. Among foreign doctors there are two contingents: the first contingent thinks that it can protect for one's entire lifetime, but the second contingent does not trust that it can. [The latter] thinks that when one arrives at middle age, they should be injected again. But in my own heart, I think that cowpox can indeed protect one [against smallpox] for their entire lifetime. This is because I have tested [the method of] injection among my own community, many of whom were injected abroad, as children, before traveling to this land. At the time when they entered this land, since they were approaching middle age, many of them did not trust [that they would still be protected against] the smallpox, which is so abundant in this land. Many of them therefore requested that I bring along a strain of cowpox in order to inject them again, but I was unable to do so.<sup>65</sup> Yet during the season when smallpox was abundant in the

<sup>62</sup> *Di kluea* (ดีเกลือ).

<sup>63</sup> *Tha phu yai hai kin tam that nak that bao sut tae thai sia hai dai* (ถ้าผู้ใหญ่ให้กินตามทาดูหนักทาดูเบาสุดแต่ถ่ายเสียให้ได้).

<sup>64</sup> จุลษวี (sic: จุนลี) refers to copper sulfate, which was used medicinally both internally, as an emetic, and externally, as topical detoxificant.

<sup>65</sup> The text is somewhat obscure here, but I think that this is Bradley's meaning: *ko ha pen ik mai*

community living in the village close to our homes, among my community of American doctors none succumbed to smallpox again. Because this method [of injecting] cowpox was still effective in preventing against smallpox, none succumbed. I therefore believe that it can protect for the duration of one's life.

Another lingering question concerns when one or two children are injected and pox appear, do other children living in the same house who have not been injected acquire it in the same way as they might be infected with smallpox poison, or not?<sup>66</sup> The answer is that since cowpox usually only has virtuous properties, and does not contain poisons, it does not spread in the same way as smallpox.<sup>67</sup> One injection protects only one person; it cannot be transferred on to others at all. This is the only limitation [of the method].

Another question concerns whether or not cowpox can be injected into even very young children who are still in diapers. The answer is that you can inject a baby, whether male or female, starting just ten days after birth. The younger a baby is, the greater the benefit, so long as the child does not show signs of sores or other diseases. If [the injection takes place] early on, there will be no pain, and when the pox appear they will not contain any poison. If the child is [older and more] conscious, they are likely to be afraid of the doctor and will let others know that it hurts a great deal by crying out. Moreover, the injection is less likely to transfer to children who are [older and more] conscious because when the child cries the blood will flow from the knife wounds that were scratched for the injection. The injection will not take in the same way as in a young baby.

I, Doctor Bradley, have written this book in order to inform others of this method of protecting against smallpox, in the hope that those who read or listen to it will understand that it is a great blessing. This method has only been able to arrive in this land owing to the power of Jesus Christ,<sup>68</sup> who is the lord of all mankind. His heart is full of compassion for all mankind. Myself and all the other doctors who have come to reside in this land by the grace of the king,<sup>69</sup> are all His disciples. We prayed to God to help mankind and were thus able to bring cowpox here. He received our prayers and graciously allowed it to be so, making it possible for me to inject it successfully. Each and every day that great blessing spreads far and wide among the Thai people, so that mothers, fathers, and noblemen<sup>70</sup> could come and request that their children receive the injection. The cost of a strain of cowpox is greater than any of the medicines in this land of the Thais, but if one weighs the merits of cowpox against those of all other medicines they will see that the virtues of all other medications are 100 times less than those of cowpox. If cowpox are injected according to the American custom, they will have a benefit for

(ก็หาเป็นอีกไม่), but it could also mean that when he injected them for a second time they did not produce any pox.

<sup>66</sup> *Ja tit kan muean phit fi dat rue mai tid* (จะติดกันเหมือนพิษมีพิษหายไม่ติด).

<sup>67</sup> This is an important passage for what it reveals about the limitations in Bradley's understanding of the disease. Bradley was aware that cowpox injections were not communicable in the same way as smallpox infections. He attributes this difference, however, not to the characteristics of the disease but to the beneficial properties of cowpox lymph versus the harmful poisons contained in smallpox lymph.

<sup>68</sup> *Phra Yesujao* (พระเยซูเจ้า).

<sup>69</sup> *Phra photthisamphan* (พระโพธิสมภาร; sic: พระโพธิสมภาร).

<sup>70</sup> *Jao khun mun nai* (เจ้าขุนมูลนาย).

this land greater than anything else arriving on any junk or steamship.<sup>71</sup> This is because it provides genuine protection against smallpox, snuffing out future outbreaks of the disease in this land, and saving many thousands of lives each year. It will also spare the people of the various dangers that accompany the disease, which are so numerous as to defy counting or even estimation. Cowpox has been a greater blessing to America and England each year than a vast treasure. It will likewise be a great blessing to the people of this continent in the same way as it has been in America and England. After having conducted two trials with this strain of cowpox already, I have seen that it protects against smallpox just as certainly [as it does in America and England]. The supposed difference in [bodily/metaphysical] constitution [between Siamese and Westerners] has no effect whatsoever [on its efficacy].<sup>72</sup>

I have cared for people in this land wishing only to be of benefit to people in this kingdom. I have therefore worked diligently to inject pox to protect against smallpox in people's homes, in some cases traveling far and wide at the cost of great difficulty and exhaustion. I plan to persevere in this way until I have exhausted my physical and mental energies. I have a heartfelt desire to convince both the royal doctors and doctors of the people, so that they might help one another in following this method in the future. I wish to make all the people abandon their suspicions that [this method] cannot protect against smallpox, and to make them believe with certainty in the merits of this method, to put them utterly at ease so that they will rush to bring their children and relatives to be injected as soon as possible in order to protect them against smallpox. Those who would read this book and still not believe [in this method] are like people who do not recognize gold: I have brought them many *hap*<sup>73</sup> of gold and given them away for nothing, but they do not take them. People mistake<sup>74</sup> it for mere copper or brass, and therefore no one comes to take the gold that I am offering. Just as if one brought many buckets of fake diamonds of no value whatsoever, people would recognize that they were fake gems and would not want them. Today I bring a miraculous thing<sup>75</sup> to this land of the Thais, which if it were adopted would eradicate an epidemic disease, but it is up to all the people—lords, leaders, people, and slaves—to decide whether they want it or not. But if you should decide not to act and do not use it, it is just as if you have taken this beneficial method that we have brought and tossed it into the middle of the ocean, where its blessings amounted to nothing. I implore you to come and accept [this blessing] now. I have made all the arrangements. I will be offering injections at my home every Monday morning. I will offer injections at Wat Samplueom every Thursday

<sup>71</sup> *Mak kwa khong thi ma nai samphao lae kampan thang mot* (มากกว่าของที่มาในสำเนาแลกำปันทั้งหมด). Here Bradley is either elevating vaccination above all other types of medicine—'traditional' Asian or Western—or making a more general statement about the sources of innovative and beneficial goods in Siam, namely the junks that carried goods from China or the more recently arrived steamships bringing Western goods.

<sup>72</sup> [*Mai*] *Chai wa that nan ja phit kan ha mi dai* (ใช้ว่าธาตุนั้นจะผิดกันหาหมีได้).

<sup>73</sup> A *hap* is a Chinese measure of weight equivalent to a *picul*, which is equal to 100 Chinese catties, or 50 kg.

<sup>74</sup> *Samkhan wa* (สำคัญว่า).

<sup>75</sup> *Khong di wiset* (ของดีวิเศษ).

starting at four in the afternoon, but [I will no longer be offering them at] at Wat Thusing. But this work far exceeds my mental and physical strength to be able to accomplish it alone. I would like to invite all doctors to help me as well, and it is appropriate that Thai doctors should be paid two or three *salungs* as a service charge.<sup>76</sup> If Thai doctors will not cooperate, then I would ask fathers and mothers to help inject according to the method that I have described.

Even if one does not have a knife such as the one described above, I encourage them to use a sharp and pointy pin, and gently scratch the skin just enough for a small flow of blood to emerge. Then take fresh lymph and apply it to the wound as I previously described. Then use Apple Wood resin and white cloth to dress and cover the wound. If Apple Wood resin is not available, you can use paste and cloth to dress and cover the wound. The wound must be covered in this way to prevent air from entering and contacting the pus that was placed there, out of fear that it will dry before it has had a chance to mix with the child's blood. If fresh lymph is unavailable, one should procure the pox scabs of one who was already injected, especially the center of the scab where it is thickest, which is the first pus that dried, the dark head that is the best. If the head of the scab is too white, it is no good and should not be used. Take the pox scab and dissolve it in rainwater until it reaches the consistency of a sticky resin, then dip a feather into it enough to allow it to stick to the end. Take the pus on the end of the feather and inject it into the wound as I have already described. If one is unable to obtain fresh lymph or a scab as described here, I invite them to come and see me, Doctor Bradley, the author of this treatise. I will supply it to you; we have large reserves and we ask nothing whatsoever in return.

If you are able to successfully inject it, I ask each and every one of you to carefully extract the pus from the pox that appears after eight days and use it as a strain to inject others. After another eight days, prick that person and inject another person continuously. Do not let the strain go to waste. If you wait nine or ten days after the injection the pus will already have spoiled, so continue to inject it on in every village: do not let it go to waste. This thing is a great blessing; do not allow it to vanish. Just as with rice for planting one must preserve the seeds in order to be able to plant rice and survive each year. Without rice seeds to plant, where could we find food in the future? So with strains of pox: if we throw them away, how will we ever be able to inject it into others? True, it is a common thing, but it is also similar to a rare thing in that the strain of pox circulating at this time is genuine cowpox, which traveled all the way from America. That is why I insistently urge you all not to let it go to waste. Pass it on through injection just as you would the rice seeds used in paddy farming.

Traditionally, there have been three ways of injecting pox in America and England. The first is for father and mothers to inject their children themselves by inviting a doctor to come to their home. Afterwards, if the injections were successful, they would pay the doctor three *salungs*. That is the first way. The second way is to bring one's children

<sup>76</sup> *Kha nueai* (คำเหินย). Here Bradley seems to be engaging in the practice of "enrollment" by encouraging the participation of Siamese doctors in the practice of vaccination and suggesting the institution of financial incentives that would presumably be paid by the Siamese state (Callon, "Some Elements").



and relatives to be injected at a large building where doctors perform injections by appointment. Finally, in large cities there are places dedicated to doctors who perform injections for free, and it is normal for poor people to go and be injected in such a place. But these three traditional ways of injecting cowpox have been going on each and every year to the point where there are almost no children remaining in those countries—save a very few—who have not been injected. But those few will still succumb to smallpox for want of being injected, and therefore traces of the smallpox still remain. The remaining smallpox in those lands is a reminder to all people to protect themselves through injection. If smallpox were to be completely eradicated, people everywhere would pass one another carelessly without giving any thought to the merits of cowpox.

If someone should read this treatise but still have lingering doubts, I invite that person to investigate further into those people who have been injected since the second month of the year of the pig [February 1840], as I noted on page twelve above, about the doctor who realized that although cowpox can protect [against smallpox], and the conditions under which it is effective or ineffective. They should investigate people I have injected [since] that time, for example at the homes of the Minister of Finance and of *Chao Phraya* Phonthep, the palace of *Krom khun* Itsaretrangsarn, the palace of *Krom muen* Wongsat[thiratsanit], at [the monastic residence of] Prince Mongkut (*thun kramom phra*), at the palace of *Phaya Viset* [near] Wat Samorai, and numerous other people among the Thai, Chinese, Cambodian [*khanem*, sic: *khamen*] and Malay communities. Those who have been injected at this time with genuine cowpox number about 100 cases, but there remain about 200 people who were injected unsuccessfully. I ask that you investigate those people that I have personally judged to have been injected with genuine pox, and not those who have not yet been injected or who have been injected with spurious matter, or those for whom it is too soon to tell. If one investigates those who have already been injected but who I remain suspicious [of the efficacy of the injection], some of them may very well succumb to smallpox afterwards. You should not disparage the method of injecting cowpox to protect against smallpox on account of such cases, because in those cases it may not have been [genuine] or it may not have been successful, and those people might therefore succumb to smallpox. If you investigate those people in whom I have judged the injection to be successful and find that they have not succumbed to smallpox, then I ask that you help to encourage the spread of this method of injecting cowpox to protect against smallpox. Praise and extol the merit and blessing of cowpox as is appropriate because genuine cowpox can indeed protect against smallpox. But if it is spurious it will not offer any protection. I invite you to investigate further—and not to be suspicious for no reason—so that you might realize the blessing that I have attested to here.

For those in whom the injection is not successful, inject that person again. If after two times it is still not successful, then repeat the injection another two or three times until it takes.

Thus is the method of injecting pox to protect against smallpox.

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# Contending Identities: Islam and Ethnicity in Old Bangkok

Edward Van Roy

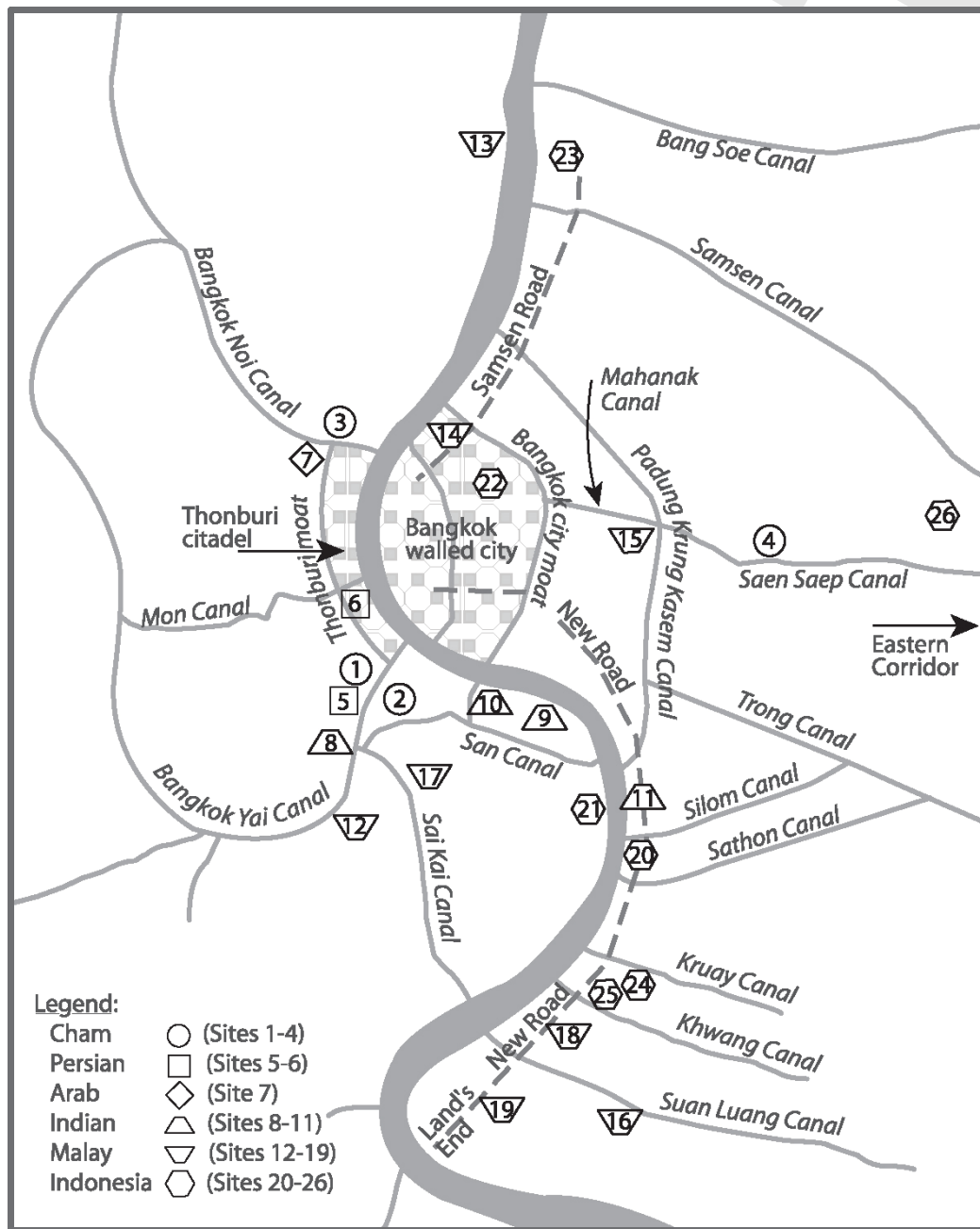
## Abstract

Over the century-and-a-half history of “Old Bangkok” (1767-1910), a number of villages representing six Muslim ethnic groups – Persian, Arab, Indian, Cham, Malay, and Indonesian – were established in the Thai capital’s peripheral precincts. The biographies of twenty-six of those settlements are briefly reviewed here to reveal their place in Bangkok’s urban development. The status and location of those ethnic minorities along the urban perimeter were governed primarily by the political conditions of their arrival. The occupations they took up filled specialized niches in the city’s economy. Their social isolation persisted largely due to their cultural inversion under Siam’s benign policy regime. Though overtaken by later developments, particularly the rise of Thai nationalism and the global Islamic resurgence, the role formerly played by those villages in Old Bangkok can be more fully appreciated, in retrospect, in terms of their varied ethnicity than simply with regard to their shared religion.

In former centuries, Siam’s Muslim inhabitants may have accounted for well over a tenth of the kingdom’s total population, depending on how far down the Malay Peninsula the Siamese realm is calculated to have extended; one knowledgeable Western resident in the mid-19th century calculated Siam’s “Malay” population at one million, about 17 percent of the kingdom’s total estimated population (Pallegoix, 2000 [1854]: 2). The kingdom’s retracted southern border following the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 caused its Muslim population to shrink appreciably; as a result, their number is today believed to account for less than a tenth of the total citizenry. In the absence of official census data by religion, a 1988 estimate of the kingdom’s Muslim population multiplied the country’s total of 2,600 mosques by a rule-of-thumb figure of 2,000 people per mosque to arrive at a national Muslim population of 5.2 million, or around nine percent of the kingdom’s total citizenry. For the Bangkok Metropolis, the equivalent figures were 155 mosques and 310,000 Muslims, accounting for six percent of the capital’s residents (Thailand: n.d. [1988?]). By 2011, those figures had risen to 174 mosques and 348,000 Muslims, or an estimated 6.1 percent of the capital’s total population (Thailand, n.d. [2011?]).

Among the Thai populace, the Muslim minority is commonly referred to collectively – sometimes pejoratively – as *khaek islam*, literally meaning “Muslim guests” or “strangers” (Scupin, 1998: 148; Keyes, 2008-2009: 21, 27; Winyu, 2014: 3, 16), a term that carries subtle exclusionary connotations implicit in a sense of

Figure 1: 26 Muslim villages of Old Bangkok, by ethnic group, 1910



Note: The numbered sites and ethnic designations here correspond with the 26 village names and mosques listed in Fig. 2.



Figure 2. Muslim villages and mosques of Old Bangkok

<i>Village sites<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Traditional village names</i>	<i>Formal mosque names<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Ethnic groups</i>
1	Kudi Yai, Kudi Kao, Ton Son	Ton Son Mosque	Cham
2	Kudi Mai, Kudi Luang, Kudi Khaw	Kudi Khaw	Cham
3	Kudi Asa Cham (abandoned, 1910s?)	- - - (unknown)	Cham
4	Ban Khaek Khrua, Ban Khrua		
	Ban Khrua Klang	Yami ul-Koiriya Mosque	Cham
	Ban Khrua Nai	Suluk ul-Mattakin Mosque	Cham
	Ban Khrua Nok	Darul Falah Mosque	Cham
5	Kudi Nok, Kudi Klang, Kudi Charoenphat	<i>Phadungtham Islam Mosque</i>	Persian
6	Kudi Chao Sen	<i>Kudi Luang Chao Sen</i> (demolished 1947)	Persian
7	Ban Khaek Bangkok Noi	<i>Ansarit Sunnah Mosque</i> (destroyed 1945)	Arab
8	Kudi Nok, Kudi Lang	<i>Dinfallah Mosque</i>	Indian
9	Toek Khaw	<i>Sefi Mosque</i>	Indian
10	Toek Daeng	<i>Kuwatil Islam Mosque</i>	Indian
11	Ban Khaek Bang Rak, Ban Khaek	Muang Khae Harun Mosque	Indian
12	Ban Suan Phlu	Suan Phlu Mosque	Malay
13	Bang O	Ihachan Mosque	Malay
14	Bang Lamphu	Chakraphong Mosque	Malay
15	Ban Tani	Mahanak Mosque	Malay
16	Ban Suan Luang	al-Athik Mosque	Malay
17	Ban Khaek Sai Kai, Ban Khaek Ban Somdet	Nurul Mubin Mosque	Malay
18	Bang Uthit	Bang Uthit Mosque	Malay
19	Ban Trok Mo	as-Salafiya Mosque	Malay
20	Ban U	Ban U Mosque	Indonesian
21	Ban Khaek Lang, Ban Suwanaphum	Suwanaphumi Mosque	Indonesian
22	Ban Toek Din	Toek Din Mosque	Indonesian
23	Ban Khaek Kraboe	Nurul Islam Mosque	Indonesian
24	Ban Kruay, Ban Trok Chan	Darul Abidin Mosque	Indonesian
25	Ban Khwang	Bayan Mosque	Indonesian
26	Ban Makkasan	Niamatul Islam Mosque	Indonesian

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Village sites follow the numbered site sequence in the text.

<sup>b</sup> Mosque names registered with the Thai government (since 1947). Mosques referred to in *italics* denote Shia denomination. All other mosques are Sunni denomination.

“otherness” (Thongchai, 2000). Perhaps that “otherness” may arise from the fact that the great majority of the kingdom’s Muslims have historically been domiciled in the South, with only a secondary presence concentrated in and around Bangkok. It has even been suggested that the name “Bangkok” (formerly Ban Kok) may derive from a centuries-old designation, “Ban Khaek” (Bajunid, 1992: 25), referring to an early intrusion of those Muslim “strangers” into the Thai heartland. In telling confirmation of the distinction between the Muslims of the South and Center, those of Central Thailand are commonly termed “Thai Islam” (*thai isalam*) in contrast to the “Malay Muslims” (*muslim malayu*) of the South. In secular terms, the “Thai Islam” have accommodated to the dominant Thai cultural ethos far more readily than have the “Malay Muslims” of the South. In that process, their traditional ethnicity has faded, if language facility, dress, and work preferences can serve as a gauge (Chokchai, 2011: 435-438). Nevertheless, they have managed to retain their traditional religious convictions and practices to a remarkable extent. The Muslims of the Center and those of the South today thus “converge as adherents of the same religion, but diverge when it comes to giving prominence to ethnicity and language over other forms of identity” (Yusuf, 2010: 43); trust and empathy within the group, and conversely suspicion and rejection of outsiders, have gravitated from ethnicity to religion.

The Siamese capital’s ethnographically complex Muslim landscape had its origins well back in Ayutthaya times (pre-1767). Ayutthaya’s diverse Muslim community was long composed of two distinct elements. One – Persian, Arab, Indian – consisted of “sojourners”: long-distance voyagers visiting the Thai capital as emissaries and merchants from distant lands. The other – Malay, Cham, Indonesian – comprised “subjects”: war captives, mercenaries, and refugees from nearby lands of Southeast Asia. The former were predominantly of the Shia persuasion; the latter were invariably Sunni. The two groups differed not only in regional origin and religious denomination but also in socio-political status and economic pursuits, and they were accordingly allotted separate settlement sites at Ayutthaya: The West and South Asian “sojourners” were provided residential quarters within the walled city while the Southeast Asian “subjects” were relegated to the capital’s extramural precincts. At Thonburi and then Bangkok, following the fall of Ayutthaya, the Muslim community came to be distributed in a more restrictive spatial pattern, almost entirely outside the walled city (see Fig. 1).

The Bangkok-Thonburi hub and its deltaic hinterlands – a region today comprising roughly the 1,569 square kilometer Bangkok Metropolis – constituted a distinct Muslim catchment zone. Yet, it probably never accounted for more than seven or eight percent of the kingdom’s total Muslim population. The preponderance of those people are descendants of the Malay war captives who were assigned to the eastern reaches of the Chaophraya Delta during the 1830s. Other, smaller Muslim settlements of varied ethnicity emerged in earlier reigns to ring the royal city. While those dispersed villages were progressively engulfed over the course of the 20th century by the sprawling density of the city’s commercial neighborhoods, the basic lineaments of the 19th century Muslim settlement pattern continue to be readily observable in the distribution of mosques (*masjit* or *masyit*, or alternatively *surao*; or archaically *kudi*; or for the Shia denomination, *imambara*) across the area.

The histories of each of the six Muslim ethnic groups at the successive Siamese capitals are briefly reviewed below as background to a series of capsule biographies of twenty-six noteworthy Muslim villages of “Old Bangkok” (1782-1910). The locations of those settlements as of 1910 are mapped in Figure 1, and the corresponding village and mosque names are listed in Figure 2. Those biographies help clarify Old Bangkok’s complex ethnic landscape. Some of the lessons evident in the light of later developments are noted in the Afterword, with the main one being that Old Bangkok’s Muslim community can be better appreciated in terms of its ethnic multiplicity than with regard solely to its religious uniformity.

### Cham militias

The ancient realm of Champa, centered along what is today the southern Vietnamese littoral, was as long as a millennium ago renowned as one of Southeast Asia’s premier maritime powers. During the centuries of their dominance over the lower Mekong basin the Cham perfected the art of naval warfare, and that skill was to become one of their defining qualities. Like many of the island kingdoms of the Southeast Asian archipelago, they were influenced by a continuing stream of South and West Asian traders and clerics to abandon their ancestral cults in favor of, first, Hinduism and, later, Islam. Over the course of the 14th-16th centuries Champa came under unrelenting pressure from the southward-spreading Vietnamese, compelling a Cham exodus up the Mekong watershed into Cambodia, with others dispersing across the sea to the Malay Peninsula and Indonesian archipelago. Some of those who settled inland were captured by Siamese raiders as early as the 15th century. Others joined Siamese military campaigns as mercenaries in the early 17th century. They continued to play an important naval role in Siam over the ensuing generations, extending into the 19th century and beyond (Sorayut, 2007: 112-113; Scupin, 1998: 240-242).

At Ayutthaya, the Cham warriors were provided a settlement site along the outer bank of the Chaophraya River south of the walled city, bounded by Khu Cham (the Cham Moat) and Khlong Takhian (the Ironwood Canal). The Cham militias (*krom asa cham*) gained acclaim for their prowess in boatbuilding and both freshwater and saltwater naval warfare (Ishii, 2012: 241-242). In ceremonial processions along Ayutthaya’s rivers, Cham sailors were accorded the distinction of paddling the royal barges, a function they continued to perform at Bangkok into the 20th century (Sujaritlak, 1983: 95-102). The chief of the Cham community and commander of the Cham militia at Ayutthaya customarily carried the title of Phraya Racha Wangsan (alternatively Bangsan), and that title – plus many others for his subordinates – was reinstated and elaborated in the Bangkok era (Sorayut, 2001: 11-25; Ishii, 2012: 243; Sisak, 1996).

Some seventy kilometers down the Chaophraya River from Ayutthaya, at the mouth of the Bangkok Yai Canal, behind the well-fortified Thonburi trade depot and customs station, Siam had since the 1600s posted a Cham military garrison (Cushman, 2000: 307-308; Sorayut, 2001: 5-8). Over the course of the Burmese invaders’ final, fatal strike against Ayutthaya in early 1767, that military outpost was assaulted and destroyed, with its Cham defenders killed, captured, or reduced to headlong flight (Cushman, 2000:

496, 498-499; Sorayut, 2001: 15-17, 19-20, 28-29). Around the same time, hundreds of Ayutthaya's Muslim households – Persian, Arab, and Malay as well as Cham – anticipating the capital's imminent fall to Burmese assault, outfitted rafts on which they stealthily drifted off, bribing the besieging forces along the way to allow their safe passage. Many made their way downstream to Thonburi, where their rafts sheltered along the Bangkok Yai Canal. Once the political situation had stabilized following the departure of the Burmese forces and the investiture of Phraya Taksin as ruler of a reborn Siamese kingdom centered at Thonburi, the Muslim raft dwellers were assigned more permanent village sites ashore, along the new capital's outskirts. The humble beginnings of the Thonburi Reign as a cluster of refugee settlements surrounding King Taksin's nascent citadel marked the start of a remarkable resurrection of the Siamese polity, with the powerful memory of Ayutthaya as its guide. Thonburi's Cham community played no small part in that renaissance by providing naval battalions for Taksin's many military exploits. Later generations of Cham settlers at Bangkok, whether war captives, mercenaries, or asylum seekers, continued to benefit from that legacy.

*Site 1. Kudi Yai (Village on the Bangkok Yai Canal), later Kudi Kao (Old Village), presently Ton Son (Pine Tree Village)*

The Cham presence at Thonburi, dating well back into the Ayutthaya period, centered on a military cantonment situated along the lower reaches of the Bangkok Yai Canal directly behind the fortifications guarding that strategic point on the Chaophraya River. Known as Kudi Yai (after the canal name), that Cham village came to an abrupt end in early 1767 with the destruction of the Thonburi fort at the hands of the Burmese invaders. The site was soon repopulated by Cham survivors of the Ayutthaya holocaust. Over the following years, with the construction of the Thonburi Grand Palace on the site of the former fort, Kudi Yai came to occupy a privileged position, with the Cham reverting to their distinctive naval tradition (Sisak, 1996: 123; Sorayut, 2001: 19-25). In affirmation of that role, the royal shipyards and barge sheds were established directly across from the Cham settlement along the outer bank of the Bangkok Yai Canal (that stretch of the waterway now called the Bang Luang Canal, or "Royal Settlement Canal"). In the Third Reign, however, it was decided to relocate the royal barge sheds to a more prominent site along the opposite shore of the Chaophraya River, at Wat Phra Chetuphon, while the royal shipyards were moved a kilometer up the Bangkok Yai Canal to a new naval base at the confluence of the Sai Kai Canal. Many of the Cham shipwrights and sailors of Kudi Yai followed, and the military importance of the old Cham settlement consequently declined. As if to reassure the Cham villagers of his continued favor, the king extended to them his patronage in the reconstruction of their mosque at Kudi Yai, including the gift of a stand of tropical pine trees (*ton son*) to grace its forecourt (Phathara, 2007: 129). The name of the village and mosque in popular usage was consequently revised to Ton Son, and so it remains to this day, though the pine trees themselves have long since disappeared. Like the settlement's abandonment of its traditional naval function, its changed name has done much to obscure its role in Old Bangkok's history. At the same time, the village has taken on renewed importance in Bangkok's Muslim community through its adherence to the traditional, liberal school



of Southeast Asian Muslim thought and practice in the lively local debate over Islamic reform (Winyu, 2014: 16-20).

*Site 2. Kudi Mai (New Village), or Kudi Luang (Village on the Bang Luang Canal), later Kudi Khaw (White Mosque Village)*

Some of the Cham refugees who had nestled their rafhouses along the Bang Luang Canal in the wake of Ayutthaya's collapse eventually moved to dry-land homesteads on the less crowded canal shoreline opposite Kudi Yai. There they established Kudi Mai (the New Village), leaving Kudi Yai to be re-dubbed Kudi Kao (the Old Village), and they built there the Bang Luang Mosque, otherwise known as Kudi Luang (Penchan, 2008; Saowani, 2001: 96). At Kudi Mai the Cham settlers found ready employment as shipwrights and sailors at the royal shipyard and barge sheds lining the canal bank. For several generations the village prospered in its naval employment, until the Third Reign removal of the barge sheds to the riverfront at Wat Phra Chetuphon and the shipyard up the Bangkok Yai Canal to the Sai Kai Canal. Thereafter, Kudi Mai, like its cross-canal counterpart Kudi Yai, fell into decline as many of its households moved away and those that remained abandoned their naval calling. Coincident with that cultural dilution, the Bang Luang Mosque was rebuilt in a style emulative of a Thai Buddhist temple, featuring white-plastered brick walls, decorative gables, and tiled roof. In recognition of its gleaming white facade it came to be called Kudi Khaw (the White Mosque), with the village name being revised accordingly. Over the subsequent generations the former close association between Kudi Khaw and Ton Son faded, and today the two much-reduced villages are quite distinct.

*Site 3. Kudi Asa Cham (Cham Militia Village)*

The 1779/80 passage of a Thai army through Cambodia, led by Chaophraya Surasi (Bunma, the future First Reign viceroy), conscripted large numbers of local troops (Thiphakorawong, 1990, vol. 1: 25). Among those recruits were Cham naval squadrons, several companies of which accompanied the Siamese forces back to Thonburi. After Bunma was installed as Siam's viceroy in 1782, those Cham troops were bivouacked along the Bangkok Noi Canal, directly across the river from the Front Palace, the viceroy's stronghold. There they set up the viceroy's shipyard and barge sheds alongside their cantonment, mirroring the king's Cham naval garrison on the Bang Luang Canal at Kudi Yai (Site 1). The Bangkok Noi Canal settlement endured under the patronage of successive viceroys despite recurrent periods of neglect and attrition. Under Phra Pin Klao (Chutamani), the Fourth Reign viceroy, its sailors served on anti-piracy gunboat cruises along Siam's seaboard provinces (Suporn, 1998: 134, 136-137). During the Fifth Reign, however, they languished as the viceroy's power waned. The situation came to a head around 1880 with King Chulalongkorn's decision to consolidate the administratively splintered Grand Palace and Front Palace naval forces into a single Royal Navy with its headquarters positioned directly across the river from the Grand Palace. The new facility was formally commissioned in 1883, and with the death of the Fifth Reign viceroy in 1885 and the subsequent abolition of his title and military functions, all the remaining Front Palace naval elements were dissolved, culminating in a fully integrated Royal

Navy Department in 1887 (Chaen, 1966). With that reorganization, the Cham sailors were transferred from Kudi Asa Cham to the new Royal Navy Headquarters, with some being assigned to the naval fortifications far downstream at Prapadaeng. Remnants of the old Cham settlement along the Bangkok Noi Canal lingered on for several decades into the early 20th century. Today the site of the former Front Palace naval cantonment, shipyard, and barge sheds is recalled in the shoreline facilities of the Royal Navy Water Procession Transport Department and the neighboring Royal Barge National Museum, sheltered in the shadow of the Arun-Amarin Bridge.

*Site 4. Ban Khaek Khrua (Muslim Households Village), or simply Ban Khrua*

At the Bangkok end of the Saen Saep Canal, no more than half a kilometer east of its juncture with the Mahanak Canal, was located in the late 19th century a group of three linked Cham settlements known collectively as Ban Khaek Khrua – consisting of Ban Khrua Nai (Inner), Klang (Middle), and Nok (Outer) (Aruwan and Baffie, 1992; Sorayut, 2007: 123). The division of that locality into three villages, each with its own mosque and graveyard, suggests separate village origins and establishment dates, with each village initially comprising an independent social unit. The earliest of those villages, Ban Khrua Klang, or Ban Kao (the Old Village), is conventionally believed to have been settled by Cham war captives carried off from Cambodia by King Rama I around 1782. They were settled along the Nang Hong Canal, a natural eastward extension of the Banglamphu Canal meandering into the Phya Thai scrublands, which they were directed to clear for rice cultivation. They may well have been conscripted in 1783 – before the arrival of the Malay war captives who later populated the area – to help dig the 2.3 kilometer segment of the Banglamphu/Nang Hong Canal which was later named the Mahanak Canal. In 1837 the residual Nang Hong Canal was greatly expanded and extended eastward from its juncture with the Mahanak Canal to become the inner segment of the Saen Saep/Bang Khanak Canal, a major military transport route serving Siam's volatile Cambodian front in the Vietnamese hostilities that preoccupied much of the remainder of the Third Reign. Thus was established Bangkok's so-called "Eastern Corridor," guarded by the Cham militia stationed at Ban Khrua. As the military conflict along the eastern front intensified in the 1840s, an additional contingent of Cham war captives was carried off to Bangkok and settled alongside Ban Khrua Kao, to become Ban Khrua Nai. A third contingent arrived subsequently to form the village of Ban Khrua Nok. Those Cham outposts fulfilled military functions quite distinct from those performed by the Grand Palace and Front Palace Cham militias at Kudi Yai (Site 1) and Kudi Asa Cham (Site 3). Over the ensuing decades of uninterrupted peace along Siam's eastern front that community's military tradition lapsed; it was eventually replaced by a commercial specialization in silk weaving for, first, the local luxury market and, later, the burgeoning tourist trade.

### Persian courtiers

Court-sponsored merchant emissaries from the great Muslim emporiums of Persia and India had for centuries been risking the difficult and dangerous but potentially

highly lucrative voyage to Siam. During those times, Ayutthaya's commercial and cultural links with the Safavi (Persian) and Mughal (Indian) empires to the west were as celebrated as were those with China and Japan to the east. As royal guests representing powerful overseas interests, the Persian state-traders, in particular, were received with lofty protocol. They brought with them such luxury wares as printed and embroidered textiles, carpets, gemstones, wines, pigments and glazes, and horses, and they returned home with such equally precious goods as ivory, tin, rare woods, aromatics, spices, medicinal herbs, and elephants. The more enterprising among them set up their own docking, warehousing, and processing facilities at Ayutthaya, cultivated advantageous local connections, married local women, entered government service, and rose to high noble rank. Their standing in 17th century Ayutthaya was reflected in their centrally situated settlement, mosque, and graveyard within the city wall. Through their dominance of Ayutthaya's Indian Ocean trade they gained continuing control of the Western Trade Department (*krom tha khwa*), with their chief carrying the rank and title of Phraya Chula Rachamontri (Breazeale, 1999: 9-15; Julisphong, 2003: 88-108). As that noble represented the commercial interests of Ayutthaya's South and West Asian Muslims at court, it is commonly asserted (in the absence of documentary evidence) that he held titular custody over the kingdom's other Muslim communities as well (Julisphong, 2008: 46-47).

To facilitate their long-distance trading ventures, the Persian merchants set up transshipment and production facilities along India's Gujarati and Malabar Coasts. From there they travelled to Ayutthaya via the Andaman ports of Martaban, Tavoy, Ye, and Mergui. During the 17th and 18th centuries several rose to the governorship of first one, then another of those key transit points. The collapse of Persia's Safavi dynasty in the 1730s, followed by Siam's loss of the Andaman ports to Burmese armies during the 1750s-1760s, had a ruinous impact on the Persian traders' position in Siam. Ayutthaya's fall in 1767 spelled their ultimate commercial collapse. The surviving remnants of Ayutthaya's Persian community were left impoverished and rudderless. Cut off from their ethnic roots, left to their own devices in salvaging what they could of their cultural heritage, aristocratic pedigree, and former wealth, their subsequent generations at Bangkok could best be called "indigenized Persians."

A straggle of Persian survivors of the Ayutthaya catastrophe were among the bevy of refugees who found their way to Thonburi in the wake of Phraya Taksin's liberation of that downriver stronghold. They moored their rafthouses along the Bangkok Yai Canal directly upstream from the Cham community at Kudi Yai (Site 1). In due course, they were absorbed into the new capital's emerging design with the assignment of a dry-land site on which to erect their mosque, graveyard, and residences. Over the course of Taksin's reign, they played no active military role, nor were they able to revive Siam's Indian Ocean trade links. Consequently, in marked contrast to the Cham, they were accorded no great distinction by the warrior king. Their leader, Konkaew, son of Ayutthaya's last Phraya Chula Rachamontri, managed to rise no higher in the nobility than the relatively modest rank of Luang Nawarat until fifteen years into the First Reign, when, through his supporters' intensive lobbying, he was instated as head of the Western Trade Department and awarded his father's former rank and title, with his younger

brother, Akayi (or Aga Yi, “Second in Command”) succeeding to that position after his death. Bangkok’s Persian community thus regained its former administrative command of the Western Trade Department, over which it retained jurisdiction for another century (Julisphong, 2003: 88-108).

*Site 5. Kudi Nok (Outer Village), later Kudi Klang (Middle Village), presently Kudi Charoenphat (after a nearby bridge of that name)*

Finding little favor with King Taksin due to their lack of military prowess, the Persian asylum seekers at Thonburi bided their time on their rafhouses lining the Bangkok Yai Canal until, most likely soon after the start of the First Reign, they were assigned a dry-land village site upstream from Kudi Yai. Their new village and mosque (or *imambara*, following Shia terminology) at the Thonburi outskirts came to be known as Kudi Nok. There they continued to reside until, around 1797, the Persian community’s fortunes were reshaped with the elevation of their leader to the rank, title, and administrative functions of Phraya Chula Rachamontri, accompanied by his relocation to a prominent riverside residence (Site 6) directly across from the Bangkok Grand Palace. Kudi Nok was left under the direction of Aga Yi, who was eventually appointed Bangkok’s second Phraya Chula Rachamontri. During the Second or early Third Reign, after the establishment of another Shia village (Site 8) further up the Bangkok Yai Canal, Kudi Nok was re-termed Kudi Klang. A century later its name was changed yet again to Kudi Charoenphat, which derives from the name of a major nearby bridge built in 1913, the first to span the Bangkok Yai Canal.

*Site 6. Kudi Chao Sen (Village of Imam Hussein)*

The dramatic rise in 1797 of Konkaew, the Persian community’s leader, to the directorship of the Western Trade Department, carrying the rank of *phraya* in the Siamese nobility, was accompanied by the award of a choice residential site along the Thonburi riverbank. Some 400 retainers are said to have accompanied him in founding there the village of Kudi Chao Sen (Imanaga, 2000: 249). The *imambara* that was built there became the epicenter of Shia worship at Bangkok for the next 150 years. However, the narrowly bounded residential tract necessitated that the village dead would continue to be buried in the Kudi Nok graveyard (Site 5), over a kilometer distant. At Kudi Chao Sen, eight successive direct descendants of Konkaew and his brother, Aga Yi, came to hold the title of Phraya Chula Rachamontri, retaining control of the kingdom’s Western Trade Department to the 1890s and exercising titular command of Siam’s Muslims to the 1940s (though the last two incumbents carried the reduced rank of *phra*). The community’s privileged status entered into an irreversible decline in 1892 with the comprehensive government reorganization that eliminated the Western Trade Department. Perhaps in partial atonement for that slight, King Rama V in 1897/98, on the occasion of the settlement’s centennial celebrations, sponsored a thorough renovation of its *imambara* and redubbed it Kudi Luang Chao Sen. A generation later, having already lost his noble perquisites with the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932, the Shia leader’s role as titular head of the kingdom’s Muslim community ended in the turbulent years after the Second World War with the election of a Malay Sunni leader to that position. At the same time



(1947), the Kudi Chao Sen village site, including its *imambara*, was dismantled and merged into the neighboring Royal Navy Headquarters. The residents were relocated to a new village site on Pran-nok Road, along Thonburi's rustic periphery. In memory of its illustrious past, the new settlement and its mosque were named Kudi Luang.

### Arab voyagers

The commerce-led eastward spread of not only Shia (Persian) but also Sunni (Ottoman and Arab) Islam across Asia intensified over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries. In that venture, the Arabs generally bypassed the Shia way-stations of the Gujarat region, preferring to round Cape Comorin to India's Coromandel coast before voyaging on to the Southeast Asian trading emporiums. That mutual distancing exemplified the prevailing West Asian imperial hostilities and trade rivalries between Islam's Shia and Sunni denominations. The political-commercial-doctrinal conflict extended to Ayutthaya, where the Arabs were marginalized in the presence of the well-established Persian community (Andaya, 1999: 136). Lacking the powerful local connections of the Persian traders and bringing cargos often less valuable and varied than those of the well-heeled Persian fleets, the yearly Arab arrival in the wake of the Indian Ocean's western monsoon excited milder levels of interest. Accordingly, the Arabs were left to play a relatively minor role at Ayutthaya. Nothing remains of their modest settlement along the walled city's southern perimeter, established in the shadow of the notable Persian settlement. Nor does any record survive of their trading activities, and virtually nothing of their other interactions with local society. Most likely, they never established much of a permanent presence, most of them undertaking the round-trip journey to Ayutthaya annually or biennially as itinerant merchants.

In the throes of the Ayutthaya catastrophe of 1767, the Arab-Persian – Sunni-Shia rivalry was set aside. A small number of surviving Arab stragglers – recollected by their descendants today as having originated in the Hadramaut (the Yemen-Oman quarter of Arabia) – joined the conglomeration of Muslim and other asylum seekers drifting downriver to the Thonburi haven. In recognition of the traditional enmity between the Arab and Persian traders, however, King Taksin assigned the Arabs a village site at the far-removed northern end of Thonburi, along the Bangkok Noi Canal, rather than along the more centrally located Bangkok Yai Canal to the south. Unlike the several settlements into which the Shia community eventually divided, the limited number of surviving Arab traders determined that only one Arab village endured at Bangkok.

#### *Site 7. Ban Khaek Bangkok Noi (Muslim Village on the Bangkok Noi Canal)*

At Thonburi, the Arab refugees from Ayutthaya were granted a residential site along the inner bank of the Bangkok Noi Canal, immediately upstream from the Thonburi city wall and moat (Saowani, 2001: 97). In its positioning, that settlement twinned with the Cham village at Kudi Yai (Site 1), along the inner bank of the Bangkok Yai Canal just outside the city wall and moat. During the First Reign, the small community of dispossessed Arab merchants found a patron in Prince Anurak Thewet (Thong-in), a

leading royal trading magnate whose residence, the so-called Rear Palace, neighbored the Arab village directly across the city moat and wall. Following Thong-in's death in 1806, followed by the deaths of his three senior sons early in the Third Reign, employment opportunities with the Rear Palace trading ventures evaporated, and the Arab village fell into decline. To make ends meet over the ensuing decades, the village turned to a variety of specialized handicrafts, including the production of rope, rattan and split-bamboo wares, and sleeping mats and kapok mattresses, which the village women sold at the popular nearby Bangkok Noi floating market. The Arab community's lifestyle was again disrupted around 1900 with the government's appropriation of much of the village land as part of a large tract to establish the Bangkok terminus of Siam's Southern Railway (Thailand, n.d. [1903?]). To make amends for the dispossession of their land and dismantling of their mosque, the king sponsored the construction of a new village mosque directly on the canal bank. However, the diminished village and its rebuilt mosque were again devastated in 1945, this time by Second World War Allied bombing intended for the neighboring Japanese-occupied Bangkok Noi rail yards. In compensation, the Arab settlement was relocated after the war to the opposite shore of the Bangkok Noi Canal, where its present, imposing Ansarit Sunnah Mosque was built, again under royal patronage. With that record of repeated disaster and destruction, much of the old village history was lost, though the community continues to cling proudly to its Arab heritage and today stands as a leader among Bangkok's reformist Muslims in its advocacy of Arabic fundamentalism (*wahhabiya*).

### Indian merchants

The Indian emporiums of Surat and Ahmedabad for centuries served as the home ports of Gujarati entrepreneurs seeking to extend their business interests to Southeast Asia. Often sharing the risks attendant to their maritime ventures in collaboration with Persian interests, unified with the Persians in their Shia beliefs and practices, melded with them through intermarriage – and thus sometimes spoken of as “Indo-Iranian” – the Gujarati business establishment formed a potent trading connection with Ayutthaya. By the mid-18th century, that Indo-Siamese commercial alignment was coming under rising pressure, not only due to the changing power balance between India's west and east coast business communities with the collapse of Persia's Safavi empire, but more immediately from mounting Burmese aggression along Siam's Andaman coast. Well apprised of the approaching Burmese peril, most of the itinerant Indian traders at Ayutthaya and its Andaman ports weighed anchor and sailed off to safer havens in good time. No perceptible Indian element was thus evident in the convergence of Ayutthaya survivors at Thonburi in the early Taksin years, nor was any Indian participation recorded in the recovery of Siam's overseas trade during the first two reigns of the Bangkok period. Only with the pacification of the Indian Ocean transport system after the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1815), the founding of Singapore as a secure maritime entrepôt (1819), the enthronement of Siam's vigorously trade-oriented King Rama III (1824), and the promulgation of the trade-enhancing Bowring Treaty (1855) did a vigorous Indian mercantile presence reassert itself in Siam. Once the conditions had been laid,

the participation of Indian Muslims in Bangkok's expanding economy passed quickly through three expansionary phases.

*First phase: Along the Bang Luang Canal*

As of 1844, Bangkok was hosting at least four notable Indian trading ventures, three functioning as branches of Bombay-based "native houses" and the fourth represented by a "native merchant" from Madras (Moore, 1914-1915: 29). The Bombay (Shia) merchants set up shop along the Bang Luang Canal (Site 8), near Bangkok's principal Persian settlement (Site 5). The Madras (Sunni) trader, lacking influential local connections, probably operated directly from his ship or from a rafthouse moored along the riverbank well downstream from the walled city. All the Indian merchants fell under the immediate supervision of the Western Trade Department, administered by Bangkok's locally intermarried and culturally assimilated Persian nobility. That ensured a degree of favoritism towards the Gujarati (Shia) trading ventures. In their efforts to gain access to Siam's state-controlled export commodities under favorable terms, they sought the patronage of Phraya Si Phiphat (That), director of the Merchandise Warehouse Department (*krom phra khlung sinkha*) and himself the scion of an Ayutthaya-era Shia lineage (long-since converted to Buddhism). That effort succeeded in the 1840s with the establishment of a cluster of Indian trading ventures along the Khlong San district riverfront in the shadow of That's estate (Piyanat, 1988: 247-248).

The Indian merchants initially specialized in the importation of calico and chintz fabrics, with imported gemstones adding a lucrative sideline. Brisk competition in the local luxury textiles market, catering to the discriminating tastes of the Thai aristocracy, soon turned the Indian merchants to dyeing, printing, and embroidering raw imported muslins at their Bangkok facilities. Those textile-processing operations relied on skilled labor, which the merchants acquired through the overseas recruitment of indentured Indian workers, most of whom returned to India upon the termination of their contracts. The transport economics of the long-distance textile trade also required a reciprocal export side. Leather, particularly the delicate and plentiful Siamese deer hide, offered a viable option, though that product involved the odious processing tasks of scraping, tanning, dyeing, cutting, and drying. With local (Buddhist) workers refusing to take on those tasks, the merchants again turned to imported (Muslim) Indian labor, a procedure that over time discreetly increased the scale of Bangkok's Indian populace (Scupin, 1998: 243-246; Inthira, 2004; Praphatson, 2007).

*Site 8. Kudi Nok (Outer Village), or Kudi Lang (Rear Village)*

Adam Ali, an Indian Shia merchant-adventurer originally from Lucknow, undertook repeated voyages from Surat to Bangkok during the Second and Third Reigns with cargos of high-quality Indian textiles. Through Bangkok's "indigenous Persian" nobility he gained access to the Thai aristocracy, who frequented his displays of shipboard stores with enthusiasm. The profitability of his textile-trading venture convinced him of the value of investing in a permanent Bangkok presence. Permission was eventually received to erect a dock and godowns along the Bang Luang Canal at Thonburi's western outskirts. There, he established a textile dyeing and printing manufactory staffed

by Indian artisans brought in on his annual voyages. The new village and mosque that he founded there for his Indian Shia work force came to be known as Kudi Nok (Outer Village, Outer Mosque), leaving the old Persian village of Kudi Nok (Site 5) to be redubbed Kudi Klang (Middle Village). His innovative venture, specializing in the local import-export processing of high-value goods with ethnically compatible skilled labor, set the standard for Bangkok's later resident Indian merchants.

*Second phase: The Khlong San district*

In his capacity as director of the Merchandise Warehouse Department, administering the royal monopoly trade, Phraya Si Phiphat (That) during the Third Reign built lines of royal godowns and docks fronting his estate along the Khlong San district riverfront. Some of those solid brick structures were plastered and whitewashed (and thus came to be known as *toek khaw*, or “white brick buildings”) while others retained their raw brick facades (and thus were referred to as *toek daeng*, or “red brick buildings”). Late in the Third Reign the royal monopoly trade, based on a cumbersome system of in-kind tax and tribute collections, was abandoned in favor of an income “outsourcing” system under which that major state revenue-gathering task was delegated to Chinese and other trading magnates functioning as tax farmers (Vella, 1955: 22-23, 127; Hong, 1984: 38-74). As the royal monopoly trade was phased out, the royal godowns were emptied of their inventories. Phraya Si Phiphat then turned to the ingenious expedient of renting the vacant godowns to Indian traders, and thereby he created new Indian merchant settlements (Sites 9 and 10) along the Khlong San district waterfront.

*Site 9. Toek Khaw (the White Brick Buildings)*

Late in the Third Reign, several Gujarati Shia merchants received permission to establish their business premises in the recently vacated government godowns along the Khlong San district riverfront directly downstream from the estate of Phraya Si Phiphat. One of the first of those merchants was A.T.E. Maskati, a textile dealer from Ahmedabad. Earlier in the Third Reign he had set up a Bangkok branch of his firm at Kudi Klang (Site 5), the Shia center along the Bang Luang Canal. Recognizing the favorable economic prospects augured by the Bowring Treaty, he expanded his operations in 1856 with a textile dying and printing factory at Toek Khaw, employing at its peak around 600 Muslim workers (Mani, 1993: 913). There he was joined by other recently arrived Indian Shia merchants in building a prayer shelter, eventually rebuilt as the Toek Khaw Mosque, later renamed the Sefi Mosque. They also built there in later years several additional godowns for expanded inventory storage, factory operations, and workers' quarters. To avoid the language and other cultural difficulties attendant to recruiting local workers for the dyeing of textiles and tanning of leather, they imported much of their own Indian labor force, the origin of the present-day Shia settlements lining that riverfront.

*Site 10. Toek Daeng (the Red Brick Buildings)*

In the aftermath of the signing of the Bowring Treaty, this small settlement was developed by a group of newly arrived Gujarati merchants at a prime commercial site



on the riverbank less than half a kilometer upstream from Toek Khaw (Saowani, 2001: 98). It occupied an old line of royal godowns at the mouth of the Khanon Canal (later known as the Talat Somdet Chaophraya Canal), alongside the residential compound of Phraya Si Phiphat (That), who had recently been elevated to Chaophraya Phichaiyat. In 1859, the heirs of the recently deceased Chaophraya Phichaiyat (That) donated to that group of Indian merchants a half-acre plot at that site to build the Toek Daeng Mosque, later renamed the Kuwatil Islam Mosque. The merchants at Toek Daeng were led by Ali Asmail Nana, a Shia (Dawoodie Bohra sect) trader from Surat who received the title of Phra Phichet Sanphanit in the Fourth Reign as an interpreter for the Western Trade Department, married a woman of Siam, and speculated in rice and sugar in collaboration with Chaophraya Phichaiyat; under his son, Jusuf Ali Bey Nana, the family firm transferred its offices crossriver to the Sampheng district's Rachawong Road and prospered in property development.

*Third phase: Crossriver and downriver*

During the boom years bridging the turn of the 20th century, many of the Shia firms of the Khlong San district relocated their trading headquarters across the river to the Sampheng district's Rachawong neighborhood, while many of the Sunni firms made a parallel crossriver move to the Bang Rak district. The more enterprising and prosperous among them branched out along such promising lines as commission agents, bankers, insurance brokers, auctioneers, export-goods processors, consumer-goods manufacturers, freight forwarders, shipowners, and property speculators. Despite that distinct move up Bangkok's commercial ladder, most of them retained their residences and mosques, as well as their principal docking, warehousing, and production facilities, at their established bases along the west bank of the river. Through that spatial buffer, they sought to preserve their families' and communities' cultural integrity and religious orthodoxy in the face of their professional immersion in Bangkok's increasingly cosmopolitan world.

At the same time, the Singapore packet steamer traffic brought in a steady trickle of Indian immigrants – Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslims – in search of new economic opportunities, many of them accompanied by their dependents. As British subjects, they were (from 1855 to the 1920s) protected by the extraterritoriality provisions of the Bowring Treaty. Their widespread presence is recorded as early as 1883 in the city's first postal register (Thailand, 1883; Wilson, 1989). Most of them took residence in the Pahurat, Saphan Han, Rachawong, Talat Noi, and Bang Rak commercial neighborhoods along Charoenkrung Road (more conveniently referred to by its English name, New Road) and also in the less crowded districts along the Sai Kai Canal on the west bank and the newly burgeoning Bang Ko Laem (Peninsular Village) east-bank port district occupying a sharp river bend some ten kilometers downstream from the city center. There they took up such petty bourgeois trades as stall-keepers and shop-owners, tailors, launderers, syces, butchers, ferrymen, watchmen, postmen, clerks, compradors, and the like. Far outdistanced by Bangkok's fast-growing polyglot population as the 20th century proceeded, those newly arrived Muslims came to form a relatively inconspicuous element of the city's flourishing and rapidly diversifying mercantile economy.

*Site 11. Ban Khaek Bang Rak (Muslim Village at Bang Rak), also known as Ban Khaek Muang Khae (Muslim Village neighboring Wat Muang Khae)*

A unique alliance of two intrepid Singapore-based Tamil entrepreneurs – Vaiti Padayatchi and Mhd. Thamby Saibu Maraikayar – played a vital role in stimulating Bangkok's Indian immigration flow following the Bowring Treaty of 1855. Padayatchi, a Hindu import-export trader, and Maraikayar, a Sunni Muslim livestock dealer, entered into a joint venture in the 1860s to raise cattle at Bangkok and export their carcasses to the Singapore market on a regular schedule (Mani, 1993: 912-913, 918, 923, 941). To staff that scheme they negotiated an arrangement with the Siamese authorities to bring in a party of Tamil workmen – Hindu cattle herders and drovers to ply their trade in an extensive grazing tract lining the Bang Rak Canal, and Muslim knackers, flensers, butchers, and laders to man the cattle stockyards along a Bang Rak river frontage stretching from Wat Muang Khae to the French legation. The beef export enterprise, with its Muslim workmen's settlement nestled directly behind the waterfront cattle pens, started up around 1867. However, the incessantly noisome slaughtering operations raised such fierce complaints from the nearby Western legations and business firms that the government was eventually obliged to act. Some time before 1880 the stockyard was condemned, and the workers' quarters were moved back from the riverbank to leave a cleared ships' landing. Soon thereafter there was erected on the vacated site an imposing Customs House, which opened its doors in 1884. No longer permitted to use the site for beef processing, the Padayatchi-Maraikayar export venture relocated to a new riverfront site near the Muslim village of Ban U (Site 20), half a kilometer downstream; in 1899 the slaughteryard was moved again, this time to Bangkok's furthest downriver anchorage, at Land's End (Thanon Tok, the lower end of New Road), to be re-established as a government-supervised abattoir from which butchered beef could be transported daily to the city in refrigerated tram cars. Though some of Bang Rak's Muslim cattlemen accompanied that move, the riverside Tamil village, its graveyard, and its Harun Mosque endured, occupying a prime tract directly behind the new Customs House to become a lasting Bang Rak landmark.

### Malay captives

The fiercely independent Malay sultanates bestriding the Malay Peninsula along Siam's southern reaches came under the steadily mounting pressure of Thai expansionism from the 17th century onward. They consequently developed an abiding adversarial relationship with the Siamese state. Repeated Thai military expeditions to subjugate the South carried off much booty, including large numbers of war captives, but they failed to coerce the sultanates into lasting submission. Even the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, which resulted in Siam's formal annexation of Patani (subsequently known as Pattani) while ceding Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Trengganu to Britain, failed to resolve the longstanding Southern political predicament (Ornanong, 2012: 58-61). One lasting effect that Siam did achieve over its successive centuries of Southern hegemonism was the recurrent deportation of contingents of Malay aristocrats and artisans to Ayutthaya's and then Bangkok's immediate outskirts, along with the consignment of thousands of

Malay peasants to the Center's deltaic hinterlands, where they tamed the wide-ranging wetlands while eking out a meager subsistence. A reign-by-reign chronology of the sparsely documented history of those forced migrations and their aftermath over the 18th-19th centuries is indispensable to an appreciation of the scope and character of Bangkok's evolving Muslim presence.

### *The Thonburi Reign*

Over the course of the late Ayutthaya period, thousands of captive Malay households were transported from Patani and the adjacent sultanates fringing the Southern Siamese frontier to the extensive flatlands stretching south and southwest of Ayutthaya, where they were assigned to fill the capital's rice granaries with the yield of their forced labor. Following the depredations and subsequent departure of the Burmese in 1767, some of those households managed to flee back to their ancestral Southern homelands, while others who had managed to evade Burmese capture and deportation resumed their disrupted lives in the vicinity of the old capital. A lesser number accepted King Taksin's invitation to relocate to the newly established stronghold at Thonburi, apparently with the promise that they would thereby be relieved of their war slave status. On the evidence of later developments, it is presumed that most of them were assigned to the open tracts stretching eastward from the river up the old Banglamphu Canal into the Thung Kraboe (Buffalo Fields) district. At the start of the First Reign the digging of the Bangkok city moat, which incorporated the lower segment of the Banglamphu Canal, and then the excavation of the Banglamphu Canal's eastward extension, which came to be known as the Mahanak Canal, set the stage for further Malay settlement of that outlying quarter (Sansani, 1994: 121; Chokchai, 2011: 414). While nothing remains of the Muslim settlements of Thung Kraboe other than Ban Tani (Site 15), several related Malay villages dating back to the Thonburi Reign survive along other sectors of the Bangkok periphery.

### *Site 12. Ban Suan Phlu (Betel-Vine Garden Village)*

In the wake of the Ayutthaya disaster a small party of uprooted Malay households joined the contingent of Cham and Persian Muslim refugee raft-dwellers moored along the Bangkok Yai Canal under the protection of the Thonburi fortifications. Of low status as (former) war slaves, they were assigned a relatively remote village site some three kilometers up the Bangkok Yai Canal from the Thonburi citadel (Saowani, 2001: 98), not far from the old Mon settlement of Bang Yi-roea Mon. There they founded Ban Suan Phlu, cultivating orchards of areca palms and piper-betel vines serving the ubiquitous Siamese betel-chewing market. Nothing further is known of that secluded Malay village until an influx of Chinese market gardeners and traders into the area in the closing decades of the 19th century borrowed the village name by titling their canal-side marketplace Talat Phlu (Betel-Vine Market). Not long thereafter the area was further invaded by a railway line running directly past the Malay village and its mosque, linking Bangkok with the western seaboard provinces, with a stop at Talat Phlu. The line started operation in 1904, and following that "opening up" the settlement was enlivened by the addition of a number of Indian Muslim petty traders hived off from the not-far-

distant Ban Khaek Ban Somdet locale (Site 17). Despite those evolving demographics and the mounting encroachment of urban infrastructure, commercialization, and ethnic diversity, Ban Suan Phlu today retains a good deal of its old Malay cultural character.

*Site 13. Bang O (Marsh Grass Village)*

This village and its namesake mosque are located on the western riverbank some five kilometers upstream from the Thonburi citadel. Like Ban Suan Phlu (Site 14) and several other Malay villages further upstream (beyond the scope of this study), Bang O was reputedly founded by Malay survivors of the destruction of Ayutthaya (Saowani, 2001: 96-97). The village leader during the First Reign was raised to Phraya Yotha Samut (Director of Maritime Construction), suggesting his official duties as a senior admiralty functionary, evidently a supplier of ships' timbers and planking for the viceroy's naval base on the Bangkok Noi Canal (Site 3). Like its contemporary counterpart, Ban Suan Phlu (Site 12), nothing is known of the further history of Bang O until the late 19th century, when the village is said to have received an influx of Malays from Songkhla led by Mohammad Phet-thongkham, an enterprising merchant who modernized the settlement's old hand-operated sawmill to steam-power, gained access to an upcountry teak concession, and built a thriving timber export business. As leader of the local community, he sponsored the reconstruction of the Bang O Mosque in 1903. Two decades later, in 1924, the community's economy was disrupted by the construction of a barrage across the Pa Sak (Teak Forest) River that interfered with the rafting of timber downstream to Bangkok, and in 1957 by an additional barrage across the Chaophraya River at Chainat. A subsequent turn to timber and rice exports to the Middle East brought an influx of Arab influence and with it a surge of Muslim fundamentalism, which remains a conspicuous feature in the village today (Bajunid, 1992: 45).

*The First and Second Reigns*

A resurgent Siam bent on replenishing its manpower base in the aftermath of the Ayutthaya disaster turned once again to the South. Demands for the revival of the old tributary relationship with the Malay sultanates were introduced soon after the start of the First Reign but were persistently resisted. Such defiance prompted repeated military campaigns – 1785-1786, 1789-1791, 1808, 1821, 1832, 1838, 1848 – mounted from the Siamese capital and its major Southern surrogates – Nakhon Si Thammarat, Songkhla, Phthalung – resulting in the recurring transport of convoys of war captives to Bangkok (Thiphakorawong, 1990, vol. 1: 115-118, 167-168; Damrong, 1993: 2-3; Chokchai, 2011: 405-418). The first two of those captive contingents, from Patani in 1786 and 1791, were settled along the capital's northeastern perimeter; a later convoy, from Kedah in 1808, was consigned to several sites far downriver. The distancing between those initial Patani and Kedah captive cohorts at opposite ends of the capital's purlieu was likely a preventive measure against their possible collaboration in fomenting insurrection.

The later years of the Second Reign saw a resurgence of the South's resistance to Siamese hegemony. In 1818, Kedah was ordered to force the recalcitrant sultan of Perak to acquiesce to Siamese suzerainty, and when Kedah resisted that command Siam in 1821



mobilized a punitive expedition. Entire villages of the Kedah populace were rounded up and trundled off to Bangkok (Damrong, 1993: 8). Most were settled in the undeveloped scrublands of Thung Kraboe (Sansani, 1994: 121; Wat Sunthon, 1990: 12-13), along the northern bank of the Mahanak Canal well beyond the city wall. Nothing further is known of those settlements, most likely because the transformation of the entire district with the digging of the Padung Krung Kasem Canal in 1851-1852, followed by the introduction of a welter of Lao, Mon, Vietnamese, and Chinese settlements, prompted the Muslim villages' relocation to the newly established Malay districts further east along the Saen Saep Canal. The remaining vestiges of Muslim settlement were eradicated by the subsequent comprehensive redevelopment of the district around the turn of the 20th century to accommodate a cluster of princely palaces and noblemen's villas, served by Lan Luang Road. While the Malay presence in the former Thung Kraboe district has been obliterated, several closely related settlements dating from the First and Second Reigns have survived.

*Site 14. Bang Lamphu (Lamphu Tree Village)*

Upon the conclusion of Siam's 1785 military offensive to remove the lingering Burmese presence from the Peninsula, the First Reign viceroy led a supplementary campaign to return Patani to Thai suzerainty (Wenk, 1968: 62, 101; Thiphakorawong, 1990, vol. 1: 115-118). As a result, a body of Patani aristocrats and artisans was transported to Bangkok as surety for the sultanate's continued loyalty. They were assigned a settlement site near the mouth of the Banglamphu Canal, within the city wall, under the viceroy's direct supervision (Wenk, 1968: 100-102; Damrong, 1993: 2). That village of war captives within the city wall was a unique (and probably contentious) exception to the convention that war captives be prohibited from *intramuros* residence. Their community center was known as the Bang Lamphu Mosque until around 1900, when Chakraphong Road was laid out alongside, leading to its name change to Chakraphong Mosque. In the 1960s, traditional Malay goldsmiths could still be found plying their trade out of wayside stalls along Bang Lamphu's back alleys, and today the neighborhood continues to boast restaurants and food stalls serving traditional Malay dishes, unperturbed by the cultural dissonance of the area's Buddhist temples, Sino-Thai marketplace, and rowdy tourist traffic.

*Site 15. Ban Tani (Patani Village)*

Despite Siam's brutal Southern expedition of 1785-1786, Patani soon refused again to submit to Thai suzerainty. Repeated assaults mounted by Bangkok's Southern minions culminated in the transport of a second convoy of Patani war prisoners to Bangkok around 1790/91 (Damrong, 1993: 2; Thiphakorawong, 1990, vol. 1: 167-168). There, hostages drawn from the Patani ruling circle were consigned to Thung Kraboe, where they founded Ban Tani and its Mahanak Mosque along the southern shore of the Mahanak Canal. They were joined by a further contingent of Patani hostages sent to Bangkok in 1792 after the suppression of renewed Southern unrest (Damrong, 1993: 3-4). No further record of Ban Tani's history exists until the digging of the Padung Krung Kasem Canal early in the Fourth Reign. With that development, Ban Tani found

itself situated at the intersection of two major waterways, the Padung Krung Kasem Canal and Mahanak Canal, which prompted the emergence of a lively floating market from which the local Muslim community profited greatly. An influx of Indian textile merchants on the canal's opposite shore during the 20th century added the Bobae Market to the neighborhood and provided Ban Tani with further income opportunities.

*Site 16. Ban Suan Luang (Village in the Royal Plantations)*

A detachment of war captives arriving at Bangkok from Kedah around 1808 was relegated to a remote tract along the east bank of the river some five kilometers downstream from the walled city. They comprised the elite element of a sizable consignment of captives (Damrong, 1993: 8), deliberately separated from the bulk of their cohort to prevent insurrection. The peasant component of that captive convoy was settled further downstream in the isolated marshlands of Thung Khru (Water Basket Tract, referring to the area's depressed, waterlogged topography), a remote exurb that today boasts a cluster of nine mosques. One of the first actions of the Ban Suan Luang settlers was to link their secluded village site with the river and provide it with a drainage and irrigation base by digging the Suan Luang Canal, reaching more than a kilometer into the deltaic jungle. Second was the construction of the settlement's linchpin mosque, today known as the al-Athik (Old, or Original) Mosque. After several generations of isolation and deprivation, the settlement's prospects were greatly improved in the 1860s with the extension of New Road, Bangkok's first major thoroughfare, downriver to Bang Ko Laem and Land's End. That development brought a stream of new employment opportunities to the local Muslim community with the establishment of square-rigger and tramp steamer docks, a bevy of Western rice and timber export firms (e.g., the Borneo Company, 1856; Clarke and Co., 1882; the East Asiatic Company, 1897), the Siam Electric Company's downriver tram terminus (1894), the Bangkok municipal abattoir (1899), and not long thereafter one of Bangkok's first coal-fired electric generating plants.

*The Third Reign*

Renewed unrest in the South starting around 1830 was met in 1832 by a robust Siamese military response. Under the impetus of the Third Reign's vigorous development policy, the resultant Malay defeat led to the deportation to Bangkok of some 4,000-5,000 war captives (Vella, 1955: 68-70; Moor, 1968: 201-202), a number that likely refers to households rather than individuals. Again in 1838-1839, mounting disorder in the rebellious South prompted a punitive Thai expedition that led to the forced migration of even greater numbers of Malay households to the Center. Most of the captives were consigned to the hinterlands along the "Eastern Corridor" extending far east from the capital beyond the Mahanak Canal past Bang Kapi and Hua Mak to Minburi and Nong Chok, through a vast waterlogged wilderness that the Malay war prisoners gradually domesticated for paddy cultivation. The 56-kilometer Saen Saep/Bang Khanak Canal, extending from Bangkok to the Bang Pakong River, was dug between 1837 and 1839; the addition of a web of tributary canals to drain the extensive wetlands required a further decade's labor. The project aimed initially to cut the travel time of troops and

supplies to the eastern front during Siam's 1830s-1840s war against Vietnam, but it succeeded ultimately in the far greater achievement of taming and populating a previously inaccessible, pestilential wilderness for paddy farming (Vella, 1955: 71-77; Hanks, 1972: 72-74; Skinner and Corfield, 1993: 181-183). Under the loose supervision of Siam's Ministry of Lands (*krom na*), the Malay captives relegated to that wasteland were left to their own devices so long as they maintained a low political profile while meeting their annual rice tax quotas for the royal granaries. Only after the mid-20th century did the extension of modern land transport and the penetration of modern mass communications introduce any appreciable tendencies to Thai cultural integration in that Malay Muslim hinterland.

Few traces of the Third Reign exodus of Malay war captives from the South to the Center remain evident today within Bangkok proper. Though there is virtually no reference in the historical records to the numbers or dispersal of the hostage elites, nor to any special treatment accorded them, it is well known that the standard procedure was to settle them close to the city while assigning the captive peasant masses to the more distant hinterlands. The only clear-cut case, parallel in many respects to the earlier examples of Bang Lamphu (Site 14) and Ban Tani (Site 15), is the following:

*Site 17. Ban Khaek Sai Kai (Muslim Village on the Sai Kai Canal), later known as Ban Khaek Ban Somdet (Muslim Village near the Regent's Residence)*

During the Third Reign, Chaophraya Prayurawong (Dit) and his younger brother Phraya Si Phiphat (That, later raised to Chaophraya Phichaiyat) each in turn led a military expedition against the rebellious South, Dit in 1832 and That in 1838. As reward for their services, they each received for their personal retinues a consignment of captive Malay artisans – Patani and Kelantan goldsmiths, silversmiths, silk weavers, and the like (Saowani, 2001: 97; Winyu, 2014: 9). To accommodate them, Ban Khaek Sai Kai with its mosque and graveyard was established shortly after 1832 along the Sai Kai Canal, behind Dit's estate, and a lesser settlement, sometimes referred to as Ban Chang Thong (Goldsmiths' Village), was created around 1840 behind That's estate nearby. Ban Khaek Sai Kai prospered under the patronage of Dit and then his son, Chaophraya Si Suriyawong (Chuang), who rose to the unparalleled rank of Regent of Siam and built himself a princely retreat nearby known as Ban Somdet Chaophraya (the Regent's Residence) – and thus the village name was changed to Ban Khaek Ban Somdet. For obscure reasons, however, the smaller Malay community behind That's estate failed to flourish. It neither built a mosque nor laid out a burial ground, nor did it ever adopt an individuating name, and so it never attained formal village status. Over the following century, the residents of Ban Chang Thong were largely absorbed into Ban Khaek Ban Somdet. At the same time, the addition of considerable numbers of Indian Muslim immigrants – peddlers, shop-owners, handicraft producers, and the like – transformed the character of Ban Khaek Ban Somdet from an isolated Malay village to one of Bangkok's most cosmopolitan Muslim neighborhoods.

#### *The Fourth and Fifth Reigns*

Bangkok's increasingly buoyant economy under the free-trade regime introduced

by the Bowring Treaty offered a wealth of new employment opportunities for the city's various Muslim communities. Among the Sunni Muslim settlements of the Khlong San district and lower west bank of the river, the assimilative influence of Malay employment in Indian firms, compounded by their adjacent habitation, shared religious ritual and education, and intermarriage, formed an emerging amalgam of Indian-Malay commercial neighborhoods. For the east-bank Malay villages strung along lower New Road, reaching from Bang Rak to Bang Ko Laem, a new convention of wage labor materialized with the establishment of Western sawmilling, rice milling, and shipping firms, though the local Malay villagers did not adapt easily to the regimentation imposed by day-wage employment (Phanni, 2012). Cheap, swift, and safe tramp steamer transport inspired not only an inflow of Indians via Singapore but also a mounting trickle of Peninsular Malays, who took up a diversity of petty occupations and employments. At the same time, and through the same process, the cultural distancing between the "modernizing" Malays of urban Bangkok and the "conservative" Malays of the eastern hinterlands gained ground. The following two village sites exemplify the process.

*Site 18. Bang Uthit (Donated Village)*

A 500-meter Yan Nawa riverfront tract extending from the Khwang Canal down to the Suan Luang Canal was in the 1840s ceded by King Rama III to Prince Isaret Rangsan (Chutamani) for the development of a shipyard to support the naval campaigns then underway against Vietnam. The site was dominated by an imposing temple, Wat Phraya Krai, and came to be known by that name throughout its subsequent turbulent history of commercial exploitation (Phanni and Aphinya, 2013). After the close of the Vietnam conflict, the start of the Fourth Reign, and the investiture of Chutamani as Phra Pin Klao, King Mongkut's viceroy, the facility was converted to support royal participation in the lucrative China trade. Initially staffed by a contingent of Chutamani's personal bondsmen, that arrangement fell into abeyance during the troubled tenure of his son and successor, Prince Bowon Wichaichan (Yot-ying-yot), the Fifth Reign viceroy. After Wichaichan's death in 1885, his factotum, Phraya Isaranuphap (Iam), claimed that the tract had been bequeathed to him and attempted to revive the shipyard as his own. To secure a reliable labor force he extended his patronage to the nearby Malay village of Ban Suan Luang (Site 16) by providing a new settlement site at the rear of the tract to accommodate the village households willing to accept his offer of regular employment. In recognition of that endowment the new site was named Bang Uthit (Donated Village). Iam's business venture did not last long, however, as his questionable claim to the tract was soon contested by the crown, and he was required to return the property to the royal purse, though the Malay village of Bang Uthit was allowed to remain. Shortly thereafter, in 1897, the riverside tract was leased by the crown to the East Asiatic Company (E.A.C.), and the Malay workers found ready employment at the newly established E.A.C. dockyard, rice mill, and sawmill. In 1915, Bang Uthit attained formal independence from its parent village of Ban Suan Luang with the founding of its own mosque. It continued to prosper there until 1945, when Allied bombing destroyed the E.A.C. riverfront facilities. Today the former E.A.C. site is occupied by the popular Asiatique shopping and recreation complex, with Bang Uthit enduring nearby.



*Site 19. Ban Trok Mo (Village on Missionary Alley)*

Trok Mo – *mo* here being an abbreviation of *mo sasana*, or “missionary” – likely received its name from John Chandler, an American Baptist missionary who built an imposing riverside residence at the foot of the lane and lived there from 1856 to 1865, not far from the Bang Ko Laem Baptist Chapel. Like Bang Uthit (Site 18), Ban Trok Mo emerged along lower New Road as an offshoot of Ban Suan Luang (Site 16) during the boom years around the turn of the 20th century. It was situated within easy walking distance of the day-labor opportunities offered by the Western business firms and residences that invaded the Bang Ko Laem district with the upgrading of lower New Road and the addition of a tramline linking Land’s End with the inner city. Initially, the Ban Trok Mo households continued to attend prayer sessions in their ancestral village mosque at Ban Suan Luang. With the expanding, increasingly diverse Muslim population drawn to the favorable employment conditions at Land’s End over the early decades of the 20th century, the new settlement soon established its own mosque, giving Ban Trok Mo an independent village identity. Over the course of the 20th century and continuing to the present day, this village’s as-Salafiya Mosque, along with Ban Suan Luang’s nearby al-Athik Mosque, gained a reputation among Bangkok’s Muslim population for its fundamentalist reform teachings.

### Indonesian wanderers

It has been estimated – surely underestimated – that as of 1910 as few as a thousand Muslims of “Javanese” origin (*chaw yawa*, Thai vernacular for Indonesians in general) were residing at Bangkok, rising to around 2,000 by 1915 (Thailand, Ministry of Interior, 1910: 142; Samai, 2012: 62). They consisted of four distinct groups: Descendants of seafaring Indonesian fisherfolk who had settled along the Chaophraya riverbank over the course of earlier generations; Javanese gardeners who had been recruited around the turn of the 20th century to landscape Bangkok’s royal precincts; Buginese fugitives from Dutch colonial custody who had arrived at Bangkok shortly thereafter; and a smattering of well-heeled entrepreneurs operating tramp steamer services between Bangkok, Singapore, and the Javanese ports of Batavia and Semarang.

#### *Seafaring fisherfolk*

An ancient practice among the seafaring peoples of the Southeast Asian island world, known for their navigational skills and trading prowess no less than for their piratic bent, was to voyage far and wide in search of hospitable anchorages as chance dictated. That wanderlust imprinted a certain cultural uniformity upon the Malay-speaking world stretching from present-day Indonesia and the southern Philippines to the seaboard reaches of the Southeast Asian mainland. During the late Ayutthaya period, the ambit of migration for those voyagers extended to the Gulf of Siam and up the Chaophraya River to the capital itself, a process of maritime dispersal that reappeared in the 19th century. The following two village biographies exemplify the manner in which a scattering of Indonesian fisherfolk are believed to have established themselves at Bangkok as early as the Third Reign, and possibly earlier.

*Site 20. Ban U (Boatyard Village)*

Local memory has it that the Ban U Mosque, along Bangkok's eastern riverbank directly downstream from Bang Rak, dates back to the Fourth Reign, but it is likely that the settlement originated somewhat earlier. The village was apparently founded by a band of Indonesian fisherfolk who had formerly moored their boats at the Chaophraya River estuary, where the fishing was bountiful (as were opportunities for pilferage and piracy). The boat people of Ban U introduced a regular practice of selling their catches to the ragtag community of Western seamen and merchants settled along the Bang Rak shoreline – a boisterous quarter that grew dramatically in the years following the signing of the Bowring Treaty. During the Fifth Reign, the economic status of Ban U was further enhanced with the establishment of a formal fresh food market – the Luang Nawa Market, later known as the Bang Rak Market – along New Road directly behind the Indonesian settlement. With the men off fishing, the women rented fish vendors' stalls in the marketplace, and incomes rose as the market's popularity soared. Later in the Fifth Reign, the riverside stretch along which this little community was situated came to be known for its many shipyards (*u roea*, from which Ban U took its name), among them the marine workshops of Aaron Westervelt and Charles Allen, Howarth Erskine, Ltd., Captain John Bush's Bangkok Dock Company, and the Chinese-owned Taphao Dockyard. There is no evidence that any of the Ban U fishermen sought or gained employment at those shipyards, but some did take up a new calling as lightermen, handling ship-to-shore cargo for the nearby European shipping firms represented most prominently by Windsor Rose and Company and A. Markwald and Company. Reflecting Ban U's stabilized presence and its shift from an aquatic to an increasingly terrestrial orientation, the village mosque was rebuilt in 1919 on a plot some 100 meters inland from its former waterfront location.

*Site 21. Ban Khaek Lang (Muslim Village Downstream), later Ban Suwanaphumi (name derived from the nearby Wat Suwan Ubasit)*

A band of Indonesian seafarers from the fishing port of Trat, bordering Cambodia, is said to have established this village along the west bank of the river during the Third Reign (Saowani, 2001: 99). It occupied a sparsely populated stretch of the riverbank about half a kilometer downstream from the mouth of the San Canal, at that time considered to mark the urban center's downstream limit. In Siam's liberalized economic environment after the Bowring Treaty of 1855, the river's right bank, opposite the Western ships' berths stretching from Bang Rak down to Yan Nawa, came to be stippled with the unobtrusive docks, godowns, and premises of Indian Muslim merchants, many of them associated with Singapore-based "native" trading houses. With no religious leader of their own, those merchants attended weekly prayer sessions at Ban Khaek Lang, and several formed marriage bonds with the village. Early in the Fourth Reign they sponsored a reconstruction of the village prayer house, which – at the personal suggestion of King Mongkut, it is said – was renamed the Suwanaphumi Mosque, after the nearby, newly-built Wat Suwan Ubasit. Like the men of Ban U (Site 20), many of the Ban Khaek Lang villagers found work as lightermen, conveying cargo between ship and shore for the crossriver Western shipping companies; others collaborated with the

district's Indian merchants in dealing in the cargoes of the many Western freighters queued along the mid-river anchorage.

*Javanese gardeners*

In stark contrast to the footloose inclinations of Indonesia's coastal fisherfolk was the powerful hold of the land on Indonesia's – especially Java's – agrarian populace. That was underlined by the Javanese peasantry's cultural focus on intensive wet-rice cultivation, supported by their extraordinary emphasis on village solidarity (*gotong royong* in Indonesian). With their refined sense of communal integration, mutual support, and cloistered settlement, the Javanese villages that appeared in Bangkok around the start of 20th century showed clear traces of that tradition. They displayed a high degree of ethnic insularity and endogamy, thereby maintaining a discreet social distance from neighboring Muslim communities. On the other hand, they adapted easily to Bangkok's labor needs, meeting a ready demand for their horticultural skills and uncomplaining willingness to take up ill-paid itinerant trades and day labor. A residuum of those qualities can still be glimpsed among their descendants today.

Three times during the course of his reign, King Chulalongkorn departed Bangkok with a sizable royal entourage on a voyage to the Netherlands East Indies. The first occasion, in 1871, when he was eighteen years of age, opened his eyes to a wide range of Western technological, administrative, and educational advances, which greatly influenced his subsequent policy reforms. His second and third visits, in 1896 and 1901, both ostensibly “private,” were “in search of peace and quiet . . . , and for health reasons” (Brummelhuis, 1987: 88, 90). But even after three decades on the throne, Chulalongkorn continued to rely on his overseas travels as unrivaled opportunities to introduce to Siam the refinements of “higher civilization” (*siwilai*). One relatively minor cultural borrowing arose out of his admiration for the ornate plantings at the Governor-General's estate at Buitenzorg (later Bogor), prompting him to seek a consignment of Javanese horticulturists for Bangkok's royal precincts. Thus, not long after the royal visit of 1896, a party of Javanese gardeners arrived at Bangkok to improve the grounds of the Grand Palace and neighboring royal precincts, and soon after the king's 1901 visit a second group of skilled workers showed up to help landscape the newly laid-out Dusit Palace (initially called the Dusit *Garden* Palace).

*Site 22. Ban Toek Din (Powder Mills Village)*

This little Muslim neighborhood of Javanese origin, dating from the closing years of the 19th century, occupies a sliver of crown property hemmed in between the multi-story commercial buildings lining Rachadamnoen Avenue (the King's Promenade) and the rear wall of Wat Bowon Niwet, one of Bangkok's most prestigious Buddhist temples. Its unusual name arose from Toek Din (the Powder Mills), formerly the government's main munitions production facility, located on Dinso Road (near the present-day Democracy Monument and Bangkok Municipal Headquarters), less than 200 meters distant from the Javanese village. There is no evidence, however, that the village ever provided any workers to that facility. They were recruited exclusively to tend the royal gardens at the nearby Grand Palace, Saranrom Palace, and Saranrom Garden, as well as the double

rows of newly planted tamarind trees surrounding the expanse of Sanam Luang (the Royal Esplanade) and lining the 3.8-kilometer Rachadamnoen Avenue leading from the Grand Palace to Dusit Palace. Royal interest in grandiose urban development projects gradually waned over the following decades, after the enthronement of King Wachirawut (Rama VI); with the fiscal problems that plagued the Sixth and Seventh Reigns, the government cut back on the Ban Toek Din gardeners' employment, leading many of them to move to the city's southern outskirts and relegating those who remained to such petty employment as food hawkers and domestic servants. This Javanese village thus lingers on as a relic of a former era, though its residents scarcely recall their forefathers' past royal service.

*Site 23. Ban Khaek Bang Kraboe (Muslim Village near Bang Kraboe), or simply Ban Khaek Kraboe*

Located between the river and Samsen Road about two kilometers north of Dusit Palace, the initial occupants of this unsung Javanese village appeared in Bangkok in the immediate aftermath of King Chulalongkorn's 1901 visit to Java, several years after its better-known counterpart, Ban Toek Din. The village workforce was hired to landscape the grounds of the Dusit Palace (built 1898-1909), the neighboring Sunantha Garden (laid out in 1908), and various other newly-built palaces and villas of the Dusit district. With their discharge as royal gardeners during the Sixth Reign, those members of the Ban Khaek Kraboe workforce who did not depart for a new life along the city's downstream periphery turned for employment to the financially strained Siamese Tramway Company, a royally sponsored trolley line that ran down Samsen Road from a point near Bang Kraboe past the Dusit Palace and across the city moat to the Front Palace ferry landing (Wright and Breakspear, 1908: 192). Though passing through some of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods, that tramline never managed to earn a respectable profit and sought to conserve funds with repeated employment cutbacks, until it finally closed down in the 1930s. Those of the unemployed local Javanese villagers who did not move away took up work as pony cab drivers, food hawkers, and other itinerant jobs. With continued attrition, the village is today little more than a secluded hamlet boasting a small mosque, with many of its remaining men working in nearby motor-vehicle repair shops and as taxi drivers.

*Sites 24 and 25. Ban Kruay (Village along the Kruay Canal), and Ban Khwang (Village along the Khwang Canal)*

Amid the turmoil of the sweeping civil service and financial cutbacks of the Sixth Reign (Greene, 1999: 55-60, 63-65), most of the Javanese gardeners of Ban Toek Din and Ban Khaek Kraboe were released from royal employment. As a sop toward relieving their distress, they were in 1912 offered a tract of undeveloped crown land along lower New Road reaching from the Kruay Canal to the Khwang Canal, stretching inland behind the Yan Nawa riverfront. There the Javanese gardeners established two independent villages, Ban Kruay and Ban Khwang, each with its own mosque and graveyard, but local informants express no knowledge as to which of the two villages derives from Ban Toek Din and which from Ban Khaek Kraboe. Today the two villages



are separated by Chan Lane (recently upgraded to Chan Road) running inland from New Road; Ban Kruay occupies the upriver side and Ban Khwang stretches downstream. Over the course of the 20th century, segments of both villages hived off to start several new Javanese hamlets (Ban Rong Nam Khaeng, Ban Khaek Yawa, and Ban Indonesia) in Bangkok's Sathon, Silom, and Withayu districts, serving those posh residential neighborhoods as gardeners and domestic servants. Today, with their separate Darul Abidin and Bayan Mosques only about 100 meters apart and sharing a close relationship through their common ethnicity and intermarriage, Ban Kruay and Ban Khwang form a single bustling neighborhood bordering Bangkok's heavily travelled New Road.

### *Buginese fugitives*

The Buginese people, inhabiting the southern reaches of the Indonesian island of Celebes (today Sulawesi) as subjects of the Sultan of Makassar, had a celebrated seafaring tradition and an equally storied history of resistance to Dutch colonial rule. In its persistent defiance of the Dutch forward movement, Makassar suffered repeated defeats, the first ending with the Dutch conquest of 1660-1669, which drove many Buginese warriors into overseas exile. Aside from their diaspora to Malacca, Johor, Sulu, and Mindanao in the mid-1660s, a sizable Makassar émigré community emerged at Ayutthaya. Their Ayutthaya presence proved tumultuous and culminated in 1686 in an armed uprising, which was ruthlessly put down (Turpin, 1997 [1771]: 33-40; Reid, 2000: 37). Nothing further is known of any Buginese presence in Siam until the early 20th century, in the wake of a latter-day revival of the sporadic Makassar resistance to Dutch rule. Upon the defeat of that final armed uprising in 1905 many rebel families were banished to the Riau islands, isolated in the South China Sea. Some managed to escape that internment by sailing off in improvised watercraft to Singapore and neighboring mainland territories. One element of that jury-rigged flotilla somehow found its way to Bangkok.

### *Site 26. Ban Makkasan (Makassar Village)*

Some elders of this sequestered village boast that they are direct descendants of the Buginese settlers of 17th century Ayutthaya; at least one, however, recalls that his immigrant grandparents had been "invited" to Bangkok during the Fifth Reign. On the basis of that recollection, an estimate that the original residents of this village arrived during the first decade of the 20th century coincides neatly with the Dutch suppression of the last Makassar rebellion. Lacking further testimony, it can only be conjectured that an impoverished party of Buginese refugees from the 1905 Makassar defeat, having been accorded an unheralded asylum in Siam, accepted the offer of an inferior residential tract along Bangkok's eastern outskirts only because they were at the end of their tether. Their village occupied for decades a dengue-infested marsh that served as a flood catchment basin between the Samsen and Saen Saep Canals – the so-called Makassar Swamp (Boeng Makkasan) – until in the second half of the 20th century the area was improved with proper drainage, potable water, public sanitation, and a paved road. In their nostalgia for their lost past the refugees named their new settlement after their ancestral homeland, and the name "Makkasan" has continued to be associated

with the area ever since (Sansani, 1994: 265-266). Their assignment to this waterlogged tract was apparently orchestrated by officials of Siam's state railways, at that time under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Works. The Railway Department was under persistent financial pressure, and with the available supply of Chinese coolie labor fully occupied in extending the state railways to the North and Northeast, two new projects – the construction in 1908 of a rail line reaching from the capital's eastern outskirts to Chanthaburi, and at the same time the construction of workshops for the maintenance of the railways' rolling stock (Wright and Breakspear, 1908: 81) – impelled the Railways Department to search for alternative sources of cheap labor. The Buginese refugees were provided their village site directly alongside the planned rail yards and train terminus, evidently with the promise of continuing employment at those labor-intensive facilities. However, the inhospitable locale and the unremitting hardship associated with the arduous and underpaid work, compounded by wage and employment retrenchments in the subsequent austerity years, led to the gradual attrition of the village population through out-migration. Many of those who stayed on became politically radicalized during the turbulent post-Revolution years of the 1930s-1960s and as labor activists were dismissed, ostracized, jailed, and worse (information on file at the Thai Labour Museum, Makkasan, Bangkok). With that, Ban Makkasan faded into obscurity, only to be revitalized in recent decades with new wage work opportunities in the nearby Pratu Nam tourist area. Among the improvements to the village infrastructure allowed by that employment revival is Ban Makkasan's recently rebuilt Niamatul Islam Mosque, its glittering stainless-steel plated domes reminding motorists passing along the nearby urban expressway of Bangkok's vigorous Muslim presence.

### Afterword: Islam amidst the ethnic residue

For purposes of administrative expediency, the Siamese feudal state traditionally allowed its principal ethnic minorities a high degree of internal autonomy, or self-governance (Englehart, 2001: 36, 50-53). As I have sketched elsewhere with specific reference to Bangkok's Portuguese, Chinese, Lao, and Mon communities, that political paradigm was particularly pronounced in 19th century Bangkok, before it was progressively discarded in the latter decades of the 19th century and the early 20th century with the centralization of authority and promotion of nationalism under an increasingly absolutist monarchy (Van Roy, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010). Over the course of those transformative decades, a veritable cultural revolution was orchestrated from above with the introduction of a series of far-reaching policy measures to substitute slavery of all stripes with wage labor and universal military conscription, institute secularized mass education, normalize private land ownership, reform the legal system, upgrade public health and sanitation, regularize public administration, and modernize the kingdom's infrastructure (Chaiyan, 1994; Mead, 2004). Each of those initiatives had a demonstrable impact on the assimilation of the kingdom's various ethnic minorities into the Thai national mainstream. In short, with the refashioning of Siam's feudal realm into a nation state, "[the] distinctions of Mon, Lao, Malay, Khmer, and other local identities were submerged within the ideology of a seamless 'Thai' people" (Pasuk

and Baker, 2002: 256). For Bangkok's Muslim community, however, that century-long process has not been quite so seamless.

In the aftermath of the fundamental reshaping of the kingdom's collective consciousness under the nationalist impulse, the generality of Bangkok's Muslim citizens are said to have become "outwardly indistinguishable in many ways from their Thai-Buddhist fellow citizens. Indeed, by and large, they accept Thai as their native tongue [, and] in terms of their general educational background, media exposure, food and dress habits, recent social and political experiences and collective historical memory, they tend to differ very little from the other Thais" (Bajunid, 1992:20). With the inner city's ever-increasing population density and commercial tumult, a substantial portion of the old Muslim village population has moved out to the burgeoning tenements, townhouses, condominiums, and housing estates of the Bangkok metropolitan region's rising suburbs and satellite towns. Their dispersal has distanced them from the village mosque and its tight-knit social nexus and thus has loosened for many the routines of Islamic ritual and customary behavior. Cultural assimilation into the Thai national fabric and its corollary of increasing secularism, potentially quantifiable in reduced mosque attendance as well as increased rates of outmigration, intermarriage, and religious conversion, has been a natural consequence.

That is a convincing perception if viewed from "without," from the perspective of the broader metropolitan community; viewed from "within," however, the distinct Muslim village culture has held on resolutely. With the past century's continuing urbanization, many of Bangkok's old Muslim villages have been threatened by an intensifying encroachment of commercially disparate neighborhoods. The casual observer today would be hard-pressed, for instance, to find the Chakraphong and Toek Din mosques within the congested Bang Lamphu market quarter; or the Harun and Ban U mosques along the clamorous backstreets of the thriving Bang Rak district; or the Kudi Khaw, Charoenphat, or Ban Suan Phlu mosques along the secluded byways edging Thonburi's Bang Luang Canal. Yet, nearly all of Old Bangkok's twenty-six Muslim villages have survived, tucked away within the city's new "seamlessly Thai" precincts. Furthermore, Bangkok's urban core has gained an expanded Muslim presence, much of it of South Asian origin, as confirmed by fifteen new mosques spread across the Bang Rak, Pathumwan, Silom-Sathon, and Sukhumvit districts, while the congregations of many of the old inner-city mosques have been replenished by new Muslim arrivals from the provinces as well as from overseas.

The tensions embroiling cultural, national, and religious identity within Bangkok's Muslim community have fomented contending compulsions of ideology and lifestyle. They have contributed to a mixed response to modernization, an ambiguity of "multiple identities" (Winyu, pp. 12-13). The secular tendencies among those who have opted for cultural accommodation, including outmigration, are opposed by those who have chosen to remain in their ancestral villages. In the inner city village, strict adherence to Islamic principle and practice has come to serve as "an escape route for people mired in the negative morass of modernity" (Spira, 2004: 250). Stripped of their former ethnic multiplicity, Bangkok's old Muslim villages have redefined themselves along sectarian lines. Under that impulse, Islamic fervor has been on the rise. A striking visual indicator

is Bangkok's increasingly assertive, sometimes pretentious mosque architecture (Adis, 2008: 121-132). From the former humble wood-plank prayer houses fitting their villages like yolk and egg, many of Bangkok's mosques have been rebuilt as increasingly prominent brick-and-mortar edifices, with their bulging Ottoman-style onion domes, soaring minarets, and impressive newly-minted Arabic names rising as an incongruous presence over their modest village settings.

Application of the sacred precept of Muslim brotherhood (*ikwat*) as a broad, supra-ethnic imperative of Islam has waxed and waned over Islam's fourteen-century history. In Old Bangkok, that integrative ideal struggled against the everyday reality of ethnic diversity. More recently, it has come to be challenged by a dialectic of imported Islamic militancy versus indigenous Islamic traditions of moderation in thought and deed (Scupin, 1980, 1998; Winyu, 2014: 16-20). Mirroring the global Islamic resurgence, the past century has seen an intensification of religious ferment in Bangkok's Muslim community. Eased conditions of overseas travel – on the haj, and for education, employment, business, and tourism – and the rise of mass communications – newsprint, radio, television, and most recently the Internet – have encouraged a popular surge in Muslim sectarian zeal, just as it has contributed to the obverse decline in ethnic insularity (Muzaffar, 1986). Contrasting with the secularization and assimilation pursued by segments of Bangkok's Muslim citizenry, the pan-Islamic movement has generated “a very strong Islamic reformist movement in the metropolis” – “reformist” here referring to the ideological injunctions associated with fundamentalist (*salafi*) thought (Bajunid, 1992:21; Scupin, 1980). As elsewhere, that reformist agenda is in Bangkok largely a reaction against the seductive pull of secularism in a culturally dynamic, economically progressive urban setting. Though it is averred that such liberal-conservative tensions are intensifying, Muslim community elders steadfastly maintain that the character of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangkok remains resolutely apolitical.

Having discarded much of their former ethnicity under the impulse of nationalism, Bangkok's Muslims today continue to grapple with an existential dialectic – the quest for attainment of material aspirations in the “outer,” Thai-Buddhist world versus aspirations for spiritual fulfillment within the “inner,” Muslim village community. Efforts to accommodate both those contending objectives have given rise to the stress of double identity, which remains one of the fundamental realities of everyday life among Bangkok's “Thai Islam” – a term which itself connotes that existential bifurcation. That dichotomy has replaced the former ethnic diversity of Old Bangkok's Muslim community with an array of new theological ideologies.

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# Building the Next Generation of Thai-Chinese: The Role of Chinese-Sponsored Schools in Hat Yai

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## Abstract

This article exams the role of Chinese-sponsored schools in Hat Yai, Thailand in passing a Chinese cultural heritage on to the younger generations of the Thai-Chinese community. Three schools, Srinakorn Foundation, Kobkarnsuksa Foundation, and Khunnatham Wittaya, serve as key institutions for binding the ethnic Chinese community together, for teaching succeeding generations Chinese traditions, language and culture, as well as for connecting the community to a network of other ethnic Chinese communities. Evidence from interviews, questionnaires, and observation indicate that Thai-Chinese students are positively influenced by the Chinese-sponsored schools and value the Chinese elements of their blended Thai-Chinese community culture.

## Introduction

“I’m proud of being ethnic Thai-Chinese, which has a diverse culture. I feel very happy and lucky to be a person to have the opportunity to learn two cultures which can exist harmoniously together.... ever since I grew up I had the feeling the culture in the community hasn’t changed a bit, and I feel I have a part in that community.” This quote from a twenty-something, third-generation Thai-Chinese female dental student illustrates the persistent power of a blended Chinese-Thai culture in the commercially important Southern Thai city of Hat Yai.

For centuries Chinese people have been coming to Thailand as traders, travelers, and workers. Many have stayed to call Thailand home, mutually transformed by and transforming the local culture. At times it has been a struggle for those who wish to carry on the traditions of their ancestors, faced by challenges from periodic hostile government policies and pressure to conform to Thai society and culture. But Chinese cultural characteristics rest on a long and proud tradition that the older generations have felt worth preserving; while Chinese immigrants have been quick to adapt and integrate into Thai society, they have formed organizations and institutions designed to maintain community cohesion and pass on the aspects of Chinese culture that make the younger

generation, such as the aspiring young dentist, proud of their heritage and community.

Chinese-sponsored schools serve as key institutions for binding the ethnic Chinese community together, for teaching succeeding generations Chinese traditions, language and culture, as well as for connecting the community to a network of other ethnic Chinese communities. Relying on in-depth administration and teacher interviews, 175 student responses to attitudinal questionnaires, and extended observation conducted between November 2011 and August 2013, this article examines three Hat Yai schools that are sponsored by ethnic Chinese organizations: Srinakorn Foundation School, Kobkarnsuksa Foundation School, and the most recently opened Khunnatham Wittaya School. Along with other organizations, such as regional dialect associations and Chinese-sponsored charity organizations, the survival and prospering of the schools reflects a collective defense and triumph against often aggressive anti-Chinese policies of nationalist Thai governments. The schools also serve as cultural centers of focus for the community, particularly the Srinakorn Foundation School, which hosts a major portion of the annual Chinese New Year celebration. Although the schools do not teach in Chinese, other than language classes, and follow the nationally mandated Thai curriculum, they nonetheless serve an important role in passing on a Chinese legacy to Thai-Chinese students via the language teaching and cultural activities. Finally, the schools serve as nodes in a network that connect the Hat Yai community with other ethnic Chinese schools and institutions in Thailand, Malaysia and China via the teaching staff, exchanges, and institutions within the schools promoting a link to Chinese culture. As a result, the schools have helped preserve significant elements of the Chinese heritage and instilled a sense of community that retains a blended cultural identity among succeeding generations of Thai-Chinese people.

### Characteristics of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community

Hat Yai is a relatively young yet significant city primarily built by Thai-Chinese migrants, the majority of whom have ancestral roots in two southern coastal provinces of China, Fujian and Guangdong, and the island province of Hainan. Within these three provinces are five regional cultural-language groups—Hakka, Teo Chew, Hokkien, Kwong Siew (a part of Guangdong) and Hailam (Hainan)—which make up the most influential language associations and social networks of Hat Yai's ethnic Chinese community. Chinese immigrants came to Hat Yai from four main sources: railway labor, immigration from Malaysia and other parts of Southern Thailand, direct immigration from China, and, as economic opportunity increased, internal migration from central Thailand.

In the early history of Hat Yai, the Hakka group (whose members often speak a dialect very similar to Teo Chew) likely had more influence than their relative numbers due to the prominence of two founding figures, Jia Ki Si and See Kim Yong. Hakka Chinese immigrant Jia Ki Si supervised the many thousands of Chinese immigrant railway laborers, who consisted of mostly Hakka, Teo Chew and Cantonese, required for the tough construction through Southern Thailand's mountainous jungle wilderness. As the rail line approached the sparsely inhabited area that would become Hat Yai circa 1912, Jia Ki Si envisioned a grand future for this important junction. He purchased

50 *rai*<sup>1</sup> of land centered around the current Hat Yai junction railway station for a mere 175 Baht, and began developing row houses, shops for rent, and roads. Following Jia Ki Si's lead, other Chinese and Thai visionaries and investors built an infrastructure to accommodate travelers passing through this hub station, at which the track split into three separate directions. Another Hakka, See Kim Yong, followed his railroad-worker father from China, making his fortune in real estate development. A generous donor to public causes such as local temples and charities, including the land for Srinakorn, his picture graces many buildings in downtown Hat Yai.

Hokkien influence has also been strong in the Hat Yai region due to the historical governorship of Songkhla by the Hokkien Na Songkhla family from the late 18th to the early 20th century. Social disruption in China produced refugees from the Fujian area, as well as immigration from Hokkien-dominated areas in Malaysia and Southern Thailand. As Hat Yai rapidly grew from a small backwater to a center of economic activity in the region, these ethnic Chinese immigrants helped to swell the population and fuel the economic expansion of the area via rubber plantation technology brought in from Malaysia, tin-mining, processing of seafood and fish products, and the service industry catering to and entertaining regional travelers. Some key members of the Hokkien community have also exerted influence by being active in politics. For example, the current Hat Yai mayor also holds a position on the Southern Thailand Hokkien Association committee.

Teo Chew Chinese, whose numbers dominate in Bangkok and Central Thailand, have come to play an increasingly important community role as the Hat Yai economy has expanded. Opportunity attracted many Teo Chew business interests, particularly in the growing hotel and service industries. The largest local Chinese-sponsored charity organization, Siang Teung, was founded in 1951 by a group of Teo Chew Chinese who gathered socially to play traditional Chinese instruments. Today, one of the wealthiest and influential Teo Chew-origin Thai-Chinese, the owner of the Lee Garden Plaza and other hotels, heads this Siang Teung Charity, while another influential second generation Teo Chew senior business man, Nikhom Preechawiragul, holds a particularly honored position in the local community as the triple head of the 22-organization Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations, the Srinakorn School Foundation, and the Teo Chew Association of Hat Yai. Teo Chew strength in the community has also been felt in the establishment of Chinese-sponsored educational institutions, as the Kobkarnsuksa Foundation and Khunnatham Wittaya schools are associated with the Hat Yai Teo Chew Association and the Teo Chew-sponsored Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok Charity Foundation.

Estimating the proportion of ethnic Chinese as a percentage of municipal Hat Yai's population of 158,218 (2012) is quite difficult, as the Thai government does not keep reliable statistics on Thais with ethnic Chinese backgrounds, and neither are statistics available that show the proportions of the various language groups. One might imperfectly estimate the relative population of these language groups by language association membership, though the correlation to population may not be exact, and

<sup>1</sup> 50 *rai* = 19.76 acres, or 80,000 sq. meters

record keeping between the organizations may have significant differences. Nonetheless, interviews with association administrators suggest the following breakdown:

Hakka - 1200 members  
Pun Sun Khak (a sub-group of Hakka people) - 225 members  
Teo Chew - 600 members  
Hokkien - 506 members  
Kwong Siew - approximately 300 members  
Hailam - just over 200 members

Regardless of the proportions, ethnic Chinese-associated organizations in Hat Yai have worked over the years to maintain a link with the community's Chinese heritage. The active presence of the consulate of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Songkhla at Hat Yai's social and cultural events, the connection through the Chinese-language schools, and other exchanges highlight the continuing link shared with the China. Hat Yai's ethnic Chinese community leaders are extended invitations to attend PRC national day celebrations, or other international conferences, and are often honored as dignitaries or cultural ambassadors. Pictures in several Thai-Chinese organization commemorative books give visually striking images of the status accorded to Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese organization leaders. The Siang Teung Charity Foundation's Thirtieth Anniversary book shows that when former PRC Premier Zhao Ziyang stopped in Bangkok in 1981, the Siang Teung president was included in the welcoming delegation. In another undated photo, the Foundation president is seen honorably positioned at the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office in Beijing. (Siang Teung Foundation, 1989) The Srinakorn and Teo Chew anniversary books have remarkable images of the Teo Chew community's senior leader Mr. Nikhom's numerous interactions with Chinese officials and events. To emphasize the honor given to the organization via his status, two pages of the Srinakorn commemorative book are dedicated to grainy screen shots of Chinese TV and other photos covering President Jiang Zemin's 1999 visit to Phuket, where he greeted the dignitary. (Srinakorn Building Committee, 1999) Other photographs show leaders at the fiftieth and fifty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the PRC, attending other events in China, and receiving the Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs deputy director at Srinakorn.

The links with China maintained by ethnic Chinese organizations in Hat Yai indicate a general concern by community leaders to maintain a cultural connection with their Chinese origins. In the relatively short history of Hat Yai, the five major language groups have enjoyed considerable cooperation on many fronts to support this goal. The five groups have joined to form charity organizations, to provide welfare to the ethnic Chinese in the community, and to promote the Chinese cultural heritage through organized festivals. Most relevant to this study, the five groups have allied since the earliest years to pass on Chinese culture to the next generation through educational institutions.



## The role of Chinese-sponsored schools in binding the community together

Formal teaching of ethnic Chinese students began in Hat Yai in 1923 with thirty students. By 1925, community leaders organized to construct the town's first Chinese school, Jongfa Yichin, on land donated by See Kim Yong. (Srinakorn Building Committee, 1999) The teaching was in both the Teo Chew dialect and Mandarin. Shortly after its foundation, however, in what would be a repeated pattern over many decades, the social and political atmosphere in Thailand, in terms of the attitude towards Chinese people, changed dramatically. In a turbulent world atmosphere of growing fascism and hyper-nationalism, Thailand was undergoing its own significant changes, highlighted by the replacement in 1932 of an absolute monarchy structure with a nascent semi-democratic group of Thai nationalists. The government viewed Chinese organizations as non-Thai groups with possible external links and agendas that were not in alignment with their nation-building efforts. Many Chinese were seen as promoting radical democratic-republican ideas such as those of the pro-Sun Yat-sen Tongmenghui Society. Sun Yat-sen, as a Hakka, was likely popular among the influential Hat Yai Hakka Chinese population of the time. (Maliwan, 2000) The government was concerned not only about the politics of the Tongmenghui and other Chinese individuals and groups, but also about remuneration being sent to their Chinese homeland. The government estimated that during the reigns of King Rama VI and King Rama VII, between 1927-1932, more than 160 million Baht left the country for China. This report came just as the World Depression was deepening. The government began to pressure the Hat Yai Chinese schools to change their Chinese-centered curricula to the officially-sanctioned Thai curriculum, with limited teaching of Chinese as a second language. Organizations that were helping fund the schools came under official scrutiny, such as the ethnic Chinese charity organization founded by Jia Ki Si, the Chung Hua Foundation, which was subject to formal investigation in 1928 and again in 1940. Under this pressure, the Jongfa Yichin School closed around 1935, and although Jia Ki Si led an effort to reopen it, by 1938, Phibul Songkhram's nationalist assault on the Chinese community officially closed all Chinese schools in the region. (Suphakan, 2010)

Immediately after the Second World War, a freer atmosphere provided opportunity for the Chinese community in Hat Yai to more formally establish itself. This was an era of the official registration and activity of the various dialect organizations and schools. The same group that had established the Jongfa Yichin School reopened an evening school named Jongfa Yiasiw. Shortly thereafter, the five major dialect groups of the region established a full-time day school, named simply Jongfa. Working cooperatively and donating according to the strength of their organizations, the Teo Chew and Hokkien Associations each funded ten classrooms, the Hakka Association six, and the Hailam and Kwongsiew Associations provided two classrooms each. Although buying land and registering the school proved problematic under changing government policies and hostile attitudes, construction of the fairly simple thatched-roof school building was completed in 1950, under the name Srinakorn (or, in Chinese, 合艾國光學校, "Hat Yai National Glory School"). (Srinakorn Building Committee, 1999)

In 1948 several Teo Chew Association committee members proposed to start another

Chinese school in the city. Construction was near completion when the government policy changed, allowing only two Chinese language teaching schools per province, so the project was set aside and the building was given to the Association to use. As in the pre-war era, a nationalist Thai agenda bent on conforming the population into one single Thai culture combined with negatively perceived external events in China, where the Chinese Communist Party declared victory and established the People's Republic of China in 1949. The establishment of a potential communist juggernaut to the north likely had a significant impact on the renewed governmental repressive policy towards Chinese schools. Moreover, in Thailand's south, Malaysian communists, mostly ethnic Chinese, crowded the border of Thailand, having been united in their fight against the Japanese during the war. In the period after the war, many Chinese residents in Hat Yai felt appreciation towards the communists for their anti-Japanese stance, with the popularity of the Communist Party in Thailand peaking around this time. Hat Yai Chinese organizational interaction with Penang, and even trips to China by association leaders, undoubtedly further raised the suspicions of anti-communists in the Thai government. In this atmosphere, the government suspected Chinese schools of promoting a separate language and identity, and potentially establishing links with subversive foreign elements.

Thus, Hat Yai's two Chinese schools struggled to remain open and effective. In 1952, the Teo Chew Association revived its school project, tasking two members with establishing a primary school to be named Kobkarnsuksa. The following year, the school opened classes. Enrollment increased rapidly, and the school seemed to be on its way to success. But with the second coming of the nationalist Prime Minister Phibul, policy focused on eliminating the perceived threat of Thai-Chinese communists and any institutions that might support them. The government closed down Kobkarnsuksa and investigated the recently opened Srinakorn school for violating the strict rules regarding teaching in a foreign language, resulting in the school's closure in 1953 for the next seventeen years.

The Hat Yai Chinese community would weather this storm, however, and maintain the vision of sponsoring Chinese language schools that would prevent their ethnic and cultural background from becoming a forgotten memory. Both Srinakorn and Kobkarnsuksa had reopened by the early 1970s, expanding quickly as magnets for Thai-Chinese families. The continuous renovation and construction of new buildings and development of the grounds became a visible symbol of the persistent presence of Chinese culture in the community.

After Srinakorn reopened in 1970, a new president of the Teo Chew Association announced plans in 1972 to construct a modern Kobkarnsuksa school, donating 400,000 Baht of his own money. Signifying the change of status of the Chinese community, a member of the Royal Family attended a ceremony at the future school in 1973, with classes finally reopening in 1975. (Teo Chew Association, 2009) The fundraising efforts of the Srinakorn Foundation for a renovation in 1983, as well as fundraising for additions to Kobkarnsuksa, also reveal the growing wealth and power that the Chinese community had acquired in Hat Yai, as well as the continued strength of ethnic identity and ties to China. Mr. Kangsaeng Srisawatnuphap, the Hat Yai Teo Chew Association president, donated 10.3 million Baht for Srinakorn. The next highest donor gave five million Baht;

the top eleven donors all donated over one million Baht each. Changes in government attitudes toward the Chinese even allowed the PRC consulate in Songkhla to donate 50,000 Baht, while the PRC Embassy in Bangkok donated another 30,000 Baht. The roster of donors also provides an interesting indication of the strength of the Chinese identity in the community—of the 775 donors listed, only twenty-two individual donors registered with Thai names, the rest using their Chinese names. (Srinakorn Building Committee, 1999) By 1997, the Teo Chew Association's Kobkarnsuksa school was so popular that it needed new classrooms. The Association president led the organization in raising about eight million Baht for this project. Further illustrating the sustained popularity of Chinese education, the Teo Chew-associated Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok charity foundation opened Khunathaam Wittaya School in 2007 with demand driving continuous expansion of this project. The success of these schools thus represents a triumph of the Thai-Chinese community over adverse circumstances, providing a physical reminder of the community's Chinese roots.

Nothing quite illustrates the community pride and bonding provided by the schools as the annual spectacle of the Chinese New Year celebrations held on the grounds and surrounding streets of Srinakorn. There is perhaps no Chinese New Year celebration anywhere else in Thailand that is longer or more full of activity than that in Hat Yai, which is spread over twelve days. Srinakorn hosts an extravaganza of Chinese and Thai traditional and popular culture for five of those days. Food booths and promotional stalls occupy the school grounds, and the market sprawls along the streets in front of the main gate. Planning and producing this festival at Srinakorn is a major concern of the community Thai-Chinese organizations, in coordination with government agencies as well. According to the Thai Language Secretary of the Srinakorn Foundation administration committee, Hat Yai's numerous Thai-Chinese organizations work cooperatively under the umbrella of the 22-member Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations, with Srinakorn's registered foundation taking the lead role for the activities on the school grounds. The Srinakorn Foundation committee members individually donated 20,000 to 30,000 Baht for the 2012 festival, while the local government contributed about 300,000 Baht.

The entertainment provided during Srinakorn's programming belies both the continued influence of Chinese culture as well as the influence of Thai, and even Western, culture. Entertainment includes local as well as nationally famous pop bands, student groups performing Chinese dance, Thai dancing to traditional music as well as Thai country music, and even modern break dancing. Amateur local Thai-Chinese, as well as Malaysian-Chinese, take to the stage to sing traditional and semi-modern Chinese songs karaoke-style. On New Year's Eve, young local school children, aged approximately six to twelve, compete to be the "Chinakids" champion. Contestants include not only children from the three Chinese schools in Hat Yai, but several other schools as well. This talent and dress-up image contest includes wearing elaborate Chinese-looking costumes with towering wigs, demonstrating some Chinese spoken ability, and performing traditional Chinese dance and song. Chinese language is used by some of the children in their self-introduction and in giving a rehearsed blessing for the New Year.



Figure 1. Stage at Srinakorn Chinese Festival Opening Ceremony, 2012. The president of the Tourist Business Federation of Songkhla is at the podium. Starting at third from left: the Hat Yai mayor, President of the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations, the PRC Consul in Songkhla, the Vice Governor, and other organization presidents and officials. The Songkhla Governor officially opened the festival.

Entertainment on the school grounds on subsequent days of the festival includes various children's dance presentations, performances of lion and dragon troupes from central Thailand, as well as performances by PRC acrobatic or musical groups brought in by the Srinakorn Foundation at great expense. The "Miss Hat Yai Chinese New Year" contest also celebrates the Chinese connection as young ladies adorn themselves in Chinese-style outfits and impress the judges with dance performances and speeches in Mandarin. The Chinese regional dialect associations provide generous prizes for the winners, and showcase their support and participation by sharing the stage with the winners to give out awards. All these activities pack the school grounds with thousands of local community members and tourists over all five days of the school-sponsored festival.

Srinakorn and the other schools thus serve as attractive forces for the community, playing critical roles in the maintenance of Chinese traditions, albeit mixed with considerable Thai and Western influence. They provide a physical focus for the gathering of people and resources with a primary purpose of promoting Thai-Chinese culture, and helping the community stay connected with its Chinese roots. Through years of struggle against anti-Chinese government policies, the Hat Yai community, with its various regional dialect groups, worked together to ensure survival of the schools, and in this aspect, the schools are a symbol of community pride and cultural activity.

On the other hand, a striking feature of the school-sponsored Chinese New Year festival in Hat Yai is a certain shallowness and commercialization of Chinese traditions. While parents inculcate their children with Chinese culture by bringing them to





Figure 2. Young children from many local schools dressed in Chinese-inspired costumes competing in “Chinakids 2012” at the Srinakorn Chinese New Year Festival. In the lower left picture, the Vice President of Hat Yai Federation of Associations & Foundations (who is also the Hakka Association President) gives the top award

participate in or enjoy watching New Year stage shows at Srinakorn or teaching them to *wai* (worship) their ancestors and Chinese gods at home and at the temple, some of the Chinese traditions appear as a stereotype—shallow and without deep cultural significance. To the children, dressing up in Chinese-like clothes may be just a costume game, and does not relate to a true historical link with Chinese civilization and culture. Moreover, when children do perform Chinese dance and song, it is an imagined art form from a nebulous, ahistorical ancient time. There is no deep knowledge of Chinese history or philosophy, nor a following of modern Chinese pop stars, movie stars, soap operas, or other modern popular culture. Instead, the pop culture consists of Hollywood or South Korean soap operas, and Thai television and singing stars. The big draws for the young crowds at the Srinakorn New Year festival were Thai pop stars, with no Thai-Chinese link whatsoever. It thus appears that modern Chinese culture does not hold as much attractive power as it could. Trends may change in the future; with the growing economic influence of China, interest in a deeper understanding of Chinese culture may

reemerge. Meanwhile, the Chinese-sponsored schools in Hat Yai are sure to continue in their role of providing the community with a focus on Chinese culture and tradition.

### The role of Chinese-sponsored schools in passing on Chinese culture

After family, education plays the most significant role in socializing the next generation with a particular cultural identity. The fact that Hat Yai supports three different Chinese-sponsored schools speaks loudly to the strength of Chinese identity. On the other hand, the schools are, in reality, not “Chinese schools”, but Thai schools that highlight teaching Chinese language (even in this aspect, they are not the only schools teaching Chinese language in Hat Yai). Student enrollment consists of as many or more pure Thai than Thai-Chinese, and in fact, Srinakorn Foundation School is the only one that explicitly emphasizes the Chinese nature of the institution in their school policy statement, declaring that the “identity” of the school is: “A school that promotes Chinese culture”—a fairly bold declaration given the historical government attitude toward Chinese education.

The Chinese-sponsored schools all face strong challenges in which they must pay homage to a strongly nationalistic, non-diverse government agenda that competes with students’ interest and attachment to any Chinese heritage. Each of the schools accommodates the government agenda by emphasizing in their school philosophy and vision statements their role in promoting ‘Thai-ness’ and good social morals above academic achievement. Nonetheless, the administration of the schools indicates that they have not forsaken the common goal of promoting Chinese language and culture as a significant element of their curriculum through language training and extracurricular activities.

From the table below summarizing and comparing characteristics of the three Chinese schools, one can see that the student bodies of the schools are not heavily Thai-Chinese, and language instruction comprises only a portion of the curriculum; otherwise, classes are taught in Thai language with a Thai curriculum.

The actual ethnic composition of the school population is a consolidated estimate from school administrators and instructors; none of the schools officially track the ethnic identity of their students. Results of the research questionnaire of 105 responding ninth graders at Kobkanseuksa, and seventy responding ninth and tenth graders at Srinakorn, can give some confirmation to these estimates of Thai-Chinese students. Only 8.6 percent (nine of the 105 respondents) of the Kobkanseuksa students identified themselves as Chinese, while a full 51 percent (36 of 70) of Srinakorn students indicated their ethnic Chinese status. The breakdown of generation of Chinese (Second, Third or Fourth) of these Thai-Chinese students is depicted in the chart. Of the fifty-seven students who responded to the survey question regarding languages spoken at home, seven identified Chinese as the primary language, while eighteen indicated Chinese was being used as a second language at home. Thus, not all students at the Chinese-sponsored schools identify themselves as ethnic Chinese, but the significant number who do identify as such may find the curriculum in Chinese language to be particularly meaningful and influential as they build their cultural worldview.

## Comparison of Chinese-language Schools in Hat Yai as of 2011

Student body		
Srinakorn	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
2,000 to 3,000 Students	1,700 Students	1,040 Students
Grades K-10	Grades K-9	Grades 1-5
Up to 50% ethnic Chinese	20-30% ethnic Chinese	Up to 60% ethnic Chinese
Some Muslim. Some students with Malay Chinese parents, some from Tai Yai ethnic Chinese minority group from northern Thailand.	20% Muslim	Some Muslim
Teaching staff		
Srinakorn	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
Volunteer teachers: Regional recruits (5 teachers) and Confucius Classrooms program (Hanban) from China (11-13 teachers).	15 Chinese language teachers. 8 from China. Use Thai Office of the Private Education Commission to find teachers from China	15 Chinese language teachers from China.
Chinese language curriculum		
Srinakorn	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
PRC textbooks provided by the PRC consulate in Songkhla. Uses the Beijing China Language and Culture School edition (北京中国语言文化学校编), published by Jinan University Publishing Society (暨南大学出版社). Every grade studies Chinese. Primary Grade school 10 x 45-minute periods per week. Middle school only 4 periods per week. In 2014 opened an intensive language center in which students study Chinese for a half-day. In 2560 (2017) will open a Chinese program.	Malaysian textbooks. 陶華教育慈善中學中文教材 All students study Chinese language, 7 periods per week @ 50 minutes per period.	Formerly used Malaysian, now use PRC text books. Based on the China Jinan University Chinese Language Institute edition (中国暨南大学华文学院编), and published by Jinan University Publishing Society (暨南大学出版社). Every grade studies Chinese every day. Pre-schoolers learn 1 hour/day, other grades are 2 hours/day.

Activities		
Srinakorn	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
Extracurricular cultural activities, such as teaching Kung Fu, Chinese calligraphy, and Chinese songs. Religious activities concerning Buddhism. Emphasize fun festivals, including New Year and Moon Festival. Less fun festivals, like Cheng Meng, will merely be discussed in the classroom. Confucius Classroom.	Clubs: Music and calligraphy. Cultural activities during Chinese New Year, including contests, such as writing Chinese.	Multiple Chinese activities, including martial arts, dance, and music.
Language and Culture Exchanges		
Srinakorn	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
4-5 students on exchange to China in 2011 to study at High School level in Guangxi province. Foundation provides some scholarships to practice language in China for 1-2 weeks. They usually go to Nanning, Guangxi province or Guangdong province.	None.	Exchange with Penang school [Han Jiang 韓江]. Thai teachers were sent to Jinan, Shandong province to observe schools. Project to improve foreign language education, to allow 20 students in Southern Thailand to spend 2 weeks exchange in Malaysia, for students 12 years old and above.

The textbook contents are the only direct classroom opportunity to pass on Chinese culture, as none of the schools offer any other formal courses particular to Chinese history or other subjects. Although official Thai Ministry of Education materials for teaching Chinese language are available, all three schools deemed the government materials as inadequate for quality instruction. Kobkarnsuksa uses texts from Malaysia, while Srinakorn and Khunathaam Wittaya use texts from the PRC. According to school principal Malin Phanthara, Khunathaam Wittaya previously used Malaysian texts, but found Muslim content that was not relevant to the Thai context. (Malin, 2011) All three schools teach the simplified characters used in the PRC, not the traditional characters more commonly used in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

With only the teaching of Chinese language available as a vehicle to convey culture from one generation to the next, how effective can such instruction be when devoid of teachings from other elements of 'Chinese-ness', such as history, literature, or philosophy? Although the Thai and Chinese languages share some similar properties (they are both uninflected, primarily monosyllabic, and tonal), the very nature of the



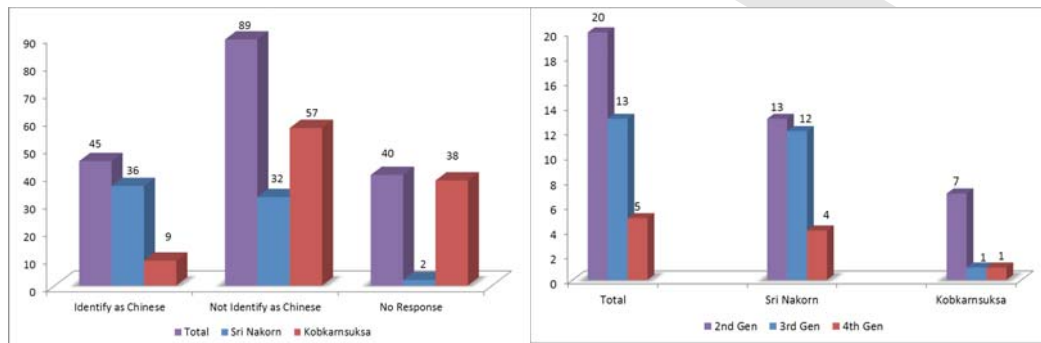


Chart 1. Students identifying as Chinese

Chart 2. Students identifying as 2nd, 3rd, or 4th generation Chinese

written Chinese language, with its basis in ideographs rather than a phonemic alphabet, sets it apart and provides some opportunity to provide a different worldview to students. As pictographs, characters embody Chinese cultural images of the things that the characters represent. Many of the characters the Hat Yai Chinese-language textbooks teach at the beginning to students are elements, because they are simple and have the fewest strokes—sun 日, moon 月, fire 火, earth 土, water 水, mountain 山. These are also key elements the children will see when they attend Chinese temples or observe Taoist ceremonies with their parents, giving them a connection with the religious beliefs of their ancestors. The knowledge of even the simplest characters could help a child unlock the mysteries of a Chinese temple, promoting interest in their cultural heritage.

Learning to read and write Chinese characters demands great discipline and memorization skills. The textbooks pay strict attention to stroke order, encouraging a way of thinking that is organized, requiring attention to detail. For example, exercises in the textbooks might ask the student to identify the ninth stroke of a character that requires nine strokes, as in the following example from a PRC-produced textbook used at Khunathaam Wittaya.

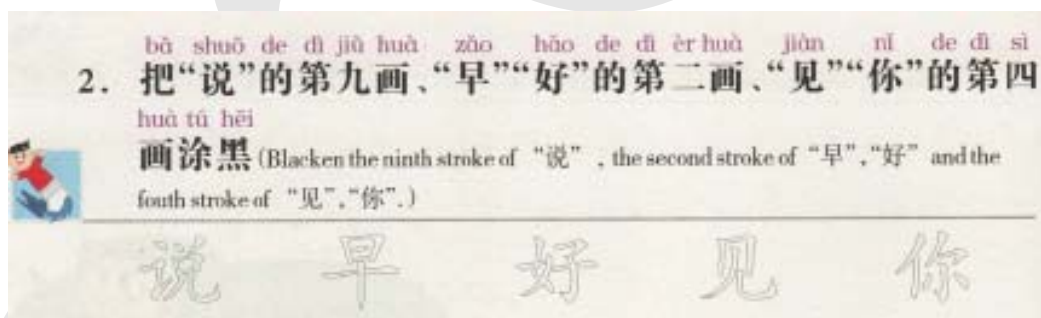


Figure 3. A first-year writing exercise from Khunathaam Wittaya's textbook teaches attention to detail in writing characters. (Chinese Exercise 1st Book, Volume B, 2010)

This exercise also demonstrates that there is a strong connection between Chinese writing and drawing. When students start learning to write Chinese, they learn as if using a brush (even if the instrument is a pen or pencil). In order for the characters to look standard, one needs to learn to lead the writing instrument across the paper in the correct way, such as left to right, top to bottom, sometimes with a certain flourish at the end as if

pressing and lifting a brush from a canvas. Textbooks reinforce this connection between pictures and characters as they provide memory aids by giving the historical origin of the characters. The examples here from second and seventh-year Chinese textbooks used at Srinakorn show this method. Chinese characters evolved from pictographs chiseled into tortoise shells or bones, often used for divination, through characters inscribed into metals, and through various periods of standardization, most famously the standardization that occurred under the first unifying Emperor of China. Thus, the characters embody a cultural history of the Chinese civilization, and Thai-Chinese students may find a connection with their cultural ancestral roots as they continue in the language, even if only subliminally.



[Figure 4. Srinakorn's second-year textbook helps children remember how to write characters by showing their origin. From Srinakorn's second-year textbook. (Hanyu 2, n.d.)]

2. วิวัฒนาการของตัวอักษรจีน

甲骨文 <sup>①</sup> jiǎ gǔ wén	金文 <sup>②</sup> jīn wén	籀文 <sup>③</sup> zhòu wén	小篆 <sup>④</sup> xiǎo zhuàn	楷书 <sup>⑤</sup> kǎi shū	
				繁体字 <sup>⑥</sup> fán tǐ zì	简体字 <sup>⑦</sup> jiǎn tǐ zì
人	人	人	人	人	人
魚	魚	魚	魚	魚	鱼
林	林	林	林	林	林
	國	國	國	國	国

Figure 5. The middle school texts at Srinakorn feature tables like this that link characters to their evolution through Chinese history. Srinakorn seventh-grade textbook. (Radab Mathayomton Nangseu Rian Pasa Jin Lem 1, n.d.)

Another feature of the Chinese language, which it shares with the Thai language, is that exact family relations are embedded in the vocabulary. One cannot just say “uncle” in Chinese or Thai—one is forced to choose a word that will show the direct relationship to either the father or mother. The textbooks used in the Hat Yai schools all emphasize family, as well as respect for teachers and community. The textbooks accomplish this transmission of cultural values through vocabulary and stories. A lesson

from Khunathaam Wittaya's first-year textbook provides several interesting examples. In the first example, children are taught that "Chinese school is my home," and that the teacher should have the same love (and implied authority) of one's mother and father. The lesson, pictured below, can be translated as follows:



"Chinese school is my home  
Chinese school is my home,  
Teacher loves me, I love her (him).  
Your home, my home,  
Teacher is just like my mother (father)."

The second example from the same textbook provides a more subtle illustration of how cultural expectations are transmitted. In this lesson, a student goes home after school to sing a song for the grandparents, followed by a traditional Chinese bow, called a *ju gong*. The family picture shows the grandparents and father in Chinese-style clothing, happily listening as the child performs a song, backed by his mother, who is wearing an apron, such as a type used for either cleaning or cooking. The scene reinforces

Figure 6. This first-year lesson emphasizes love for the Chinese school, teacher, and family. From Khunathaam Wittaya's first-year Chinese textbook. (Chinese First Book, 2010)

the traditional concept of the extended family and their roles and relationships, as the mother performs her role of taking care of the household and executing responsibility for the child's achievements. The child's role is to perform for the ancestors, showing them respect afterwards by performing the *ju gong* bow. The lesson and translation are as follows:



"After School Song: School's out, go back home, I sing a song for everyone. After singing, I give a *ju gong* bow, Grandpa and Grandma laugh ha ha, Father and Mother boast about me."

Figure 7. Family receives great emphasis in the Chinese textbooks. This lesson in the first-year textbook at Khunathaam Wittaya shows the student, apron-clad mother behind him, singing to his father and grandparents, whose dress appears to be in Chinese style. (Chinese First Book, 2010)

The textbooks used by Kobkanseuksa, which are photocopied from Malaysian textbooks, instill values by using morality stories, of both Western and Asian origin. The Western stories are ones that teach values also honored in the Chinese tradition. "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" tale, for example, is used to teach the



value of honesty. The fifth-grade textbook used at Srinakorn, in a similar vein, uses the story of young Albert Einstein, as a struggling student, to promote the idea of hard work and persistence. A Chinese morality tale in the Kobkanseuksa fifth-grade text teaches, by negative example, the very important cultural value of hard work and perseverance. The story, shown below, is about a lazy husband who lies in bed all day and waits for his wife to feed him. When she goes on a trip to her home, he is too lazy to eat the ring of bread his wife leaves around his neck, and he starves to death.



Figure 8. A Chinese morality story in Kobkanseuksa's fifth-grade Chinese textbook about a lazy husband. (Taohua, n.d.)

songs and poems in nearly every lesson. For example, the texts provide reading exercises that include Tang dynasty poetry. Such poetry can be quite difficult to comprehend for students studying Chinese as a second language; in fact, the images that accompany the poems, or the distinctly Chinese rhythm of the poetry, may have a larger impact on impressing any Thai-Chinese students' memories and emotional attachment to Chinese heritage. The poetry contains ideograms with ancient and sometimes enigmatic usage and geo-cultural references, such as a well-known ancient pagoda on the Yellow River; it is unlikely that the Hat Yai seventh-grade students will fully understand or appreciate



Figure 9. A well-known Chinese poem by the 8th century Tang poet Li Bai. It describes a scholar being on assignment far away from home, looking at the moonlight on the floor and mistaking it for frost, which makes him think of his hometown. From Srinakorn's seventh-grade Chinese textbook. (Radab Mathayomton Nangseu Rian Pasa Jin Lem 1, n.d.)

Srinakorn's textbooks are modified from PRC texts, edited by the Beijing China Language and Culture Institute and Jinan University Chinese Language Institute, and published by Jinan University Publishing Society. The modifications include instructions and vocabulary glossaries in Thai language (which is not provided in the books used by the other two schools), as well as local pictures and illustrations. They maintain a strong emphasis on teaching Chinese culture, however, by including traditional Chinese

these cultural references. Nonetheless, they may be effective in sending a subtle message of the depth of Chinese culture, which is important for some Thai-Chinese students. Two of the Tang poems and accompanying illustrations are shown below.

The textbooks at all three schools perform an important role in explaining and promoting Chinese (and some Western) festivals. The second-grade book at Srinakorn has lessons about the Chinese New Year, Autumn Festival, and Christmas. The fifth-grade Srinakorn text discusses the Tomb Sweeping Festival, which includes vocabulary lessons on





Figure 10. Another Tang poet, Wang Zhi Huan, wrote the poem, "Climbing Crane Tower," about watching a friend sail away down the Yellow River. Srinakorn seventh-grade textbook. (Radab Mathayomton Nangseu Rian Pasa Jin Lem 1, n.d.)

family relationships, followed by lessons on the Dragon Boat Festival and the Autumn Moon Festival. The table from the Srinakorn seventh-grade text below shows a comparison of American and other Western festivals (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, Valentine's Day) with Chinese festivals (New Year, Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat, Autumn Festival).

Not all lessons in the teaching of Chinese language, of course, are related to Chinese culture. Other lessons are about daily life, such as transportation, occupations, school, sports, or community. The Srinakorn seventh-grade text features lessons with vocabulary about CD ROMs, and ordering food by phone from Pizza Hut. In the modified Srinakorn textbooks, the school has tried to make images and subject matter relevant to the modern Hat

Yai student. The subject matter of the text presents Thai, Chinese and Western elements in a syncretic mix. It is difficult to know the actual effectiveness of the transmission of culture via these school materials; as indicated in the interviews with Chinese teachers at Kobkanseuksa, Srinakorn, and Khunathaam Wittaya, the ability of the students to become fluent in the language depends largely on the home environment. The results of the survey, however, indicate that Thai-Chinese children see the importance of education in defining their identity as Thai-Chinese.









เทศกาลของตะวันตก	เทศกาลจีน
 Shèngdàn Jié	 Chūn Jié
 Gān'ān Jié	 Yuánxiāo Jié
 Fúhuó Jié	 Duānwǔ Jié
 Qīngren Jié	 Zhōngqiū Jié

Figure 11. Table comparing Western holidays and Chinese festivals. Srinakorn seventh-grade textbook. (Radab Mathayomton Nangseu Rian Pasa Jin Lem 1, n.d.)

### The role of Chinese-sponsored schools in connecting the community in an ethnic Chinese network

In addition to serving as a centering point for the local Chinese community, and a vehicle to transmit Chinese culture to the younger generation, the Chinese-sponsored schools in Hat Yai also serve as nodes in a domestic and international network of other



Figure 12. Volunteer Chinese language teacher training at Srinakorn, July 2012. The Chinese consul in Songkhla, Xu Mingliang (许明亮), is seated in the middle in the white shirt and tie. To his right is the President of the Srinakorn School Charity Foundation.

Chinese communities via contacts with Chinese teachers in the classroom, exchanges and trips to Malaysian-Chinese schools and China, a Thai-Chinese cultural center, and a Confucian Classroom sponsored by a PRC government program. All schools employ native Chinese speakers, all of whose salaries are subsidized for a three-year contract period by the PRC government. The PRC consulate in Songkhla aids in coordinating with the Chinese government to supply teachers. Aside from the PRC teachers, Srinakorn and Kobkanseuksa schools employ either local Thai-Chinese or Malaysian-Chinese for language instruction. These teachers not only provide quality standardized Mandarin instruction in the classroom—they also share their cultural backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs with the students, connecting them to a world beyond their local community.

All three Chinese-sponsored schools try to supplement the language training with Chinese culture-related activities to generate interest and increase learning opportunities. The schools sponsor activities associated with the various Chinese festivals, especially the Chinese New Year. Martial arts, music and language clubs also promote Chinese culture. The president of the Khunathaam Wittaya School is a former president of the alumni association of a Penang Chinese school, Hang Jiang. Combined with the fact that the Chee Nam Kok Charity Foundation associated with the school has its mother organization in Malaysia, it is not surprising that the school has contracted for regular exchanges with the Hang Jiang School. The first exchange occurred for a one-week period in October 2011. Srinakorn and Khunathaam Wittaya both have active exchanges to China for a small number of students. The Srinakorn School Foundation is active in raising funds for scholarships, some of which are used to sponsor student language learning excursions to the PRC. These trips include one to two-week trips into southern China, as well as high school level exchange opportunities with Guangxi province.

Another indication of the strength of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai is



Figure 13. Opening ceremony of the Thai-Chinese Cultural Center at Srinakorn Foundation School, April 2015.

the opening of a new Thai-Chinese Cultural Center in Srinakorn, completed in April 2015. According to Somchat Pimthanapoonporn, president of the Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association, the idea originated from the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations. The former president of the Kwong Siew Association, the late Kampol Yenjaichon, donated approximately thirty million of the thirty-five million Baht budget, on the condition that the building be named after him. (Somchat, 2013) The Hat Yai Hakka Association president oversaw the construction of the five-story building; the spacious 2,765 square meter floor plan houses twelve classrooms, a large meeting room, and an exhibition room. (Kriangkrai, 2013) According to Somchat, the PRC consulate in Songkhla has taken an active role in planning meetings for the center, and will provide a small budget and personnel. Somchat explains that the center is meant to be a connecting point with China, and will sponsor different intercultural activities, such as shows during New Year and performances from China. He expects the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to help promote the center. He estimates that the center will need about one to two million Baht to bring in Chinese shows, and that the government may help with these activities via the TAT. (Somchat, 2013)

A significant component of China's efforts to maintain good relations with foreign peoples, including Overseas Chinese communities, has been the Chinese Ministry of Education's Confucius Institute Headquarters (汉办, *Hanban*), which manages a global structure of 443 Confucius Institutes and 648 Confucius Classrooms. (Hanban, 2014) In Srinakorn, several PRC-sponsored Chinese staff run one of these Confucius Classrooms,



which provides Chinese musical instrument tuition, supplemental Chinese reading material, and promotion of Chinese cultural activities. *Hanban's* program director has described the three main objectives of the Confucius Institutes and classrooms as “to teach Chinese, to promote cultural exchange, and to facilitate business activity,” (Paradise, 2009) which the Classroom at Srinakorn has actively supported. For example, in July 2012, Srinakorn held the second regional Chinese language volunteer teacher training. At this gathering of eighty teachers from forty-seven regional schools, the Srinakorn Foundation president credited the leadership of the PRC consulate, and support of the *Hanban* and Thai education ministry in making Srinakorn a Chinese language development center, as well as making the closely connected Confucius Institute at Prince of Songkhla University a “Chinese Cultural Window” and “Southern Thailand Chinese Volunteer Language Teacher Family.” (Chinanews, 2015) Indeed, the Chinese staff serving in Hat Yai’s Chinese-sponsored schools, the student trips and exchanges to Malaysia and China, the Thai-Chinese Cultural Center and *Hanban* institutional support all combine to keep students and the community connected to a wider world of Chinese, making the ancestral origins more real and meaningful to the younger generation.

### The role of Chinese-sponsored schools in Malaysia and Southern Thailand

How does Hat Yai’s experience of Chinese-sponsored education compare with other regional ethnic Chinese communities, both in Malaysia and in Southern Thailand? Do the Chinese-sponsored schools share the same functions of pulling ethnic communities together, teaching Chinese traditions to succeeding generations, and networking with other ethnic Chinese communities? Author Lee Ting Hui, in *Chinese Schools in Peninsular Malay: The Struggle for Survival*, focuses on how the attempt to keep Chinese education has been a decades-long political struggle of the Malaysian-Chinese trying to preserve their strong Chinese identity. Malaysian Islamic government policies have attempted to enforce a universal Malay language curriculum to build a unified, independent Malaysia since the end of British rule, and as in Thailand, the government saw the Chinese community as too insular, too connected to Chinese influence, and too liable to cause social disruption against the government. Indeed, Malaysian-Chinese had historically shown a close connection to developments in China, and students at Chinese schools could show a propensity to become embroiled in protests or revolutionary movements. For example, when the board of a well-known Chinese school in Penang, Zhong Ling, succumbed to government pressure to abandon its Chinese language-based curriculum in 1956, students started a series of protests, unfurling “Love Our Chinese Language” banners written in their own blood, demanding the school authorities maintain the Chinese curriculum. Supporters of Chinese schools see them as essential to maintaining identity, insisting on a full Chinese curriculum, including the teaching of Chinese geography, history, literature and philosophy. They have been politically active, forming organizations such as the Malaysian Chinese Association, Chinese Education Central Committee and the United Chinese School Committees’ Association in the early



1950s that linked Chinese communities across the country in order to protect Chinese community interests.

Scholar Michael Montesano's study of Chinese-sponsored education in the Southern Thailand city of Trang echoes similar themes of the unifying nature and networking function of Chinese schools. The Chinese-affiliated Trang Association for the Promotion of Education became perhaps the most influential collaborative Chinese organization in Trang as the community strove to provide Chinese language and cultural education for the younger generation. Montesano notes that Chinese-sponsored education was a unifying effort for the community, that "deepened the contact" of Trang Chinese "with Chinese populations elsewhere in Thailand and Southeast Asia, their engagement with trends among those populations, and their exposure to and even unwitting participation in developments in China." (Montesano, 2008) As with the Hat Yai schools, the Trang Chinese-sponsored schools followed the Thai national curriculum, providing only a limited amount of instruction in Chinese language. Montesano notes that the schools eventually evolved from a heavy Penang orientation, which reinforced Chinese characteristics, to becoming more aligned with Bangkok, in which the emphasis became to prepare students academically to enter into the higher education system in Thai or English medium education. One might infer from this evolution that the Chinese cultural influence may have been diluted, although the Trang Chinese community still retains many Chinese cultural characteristics. Overall, the story of Chinese-sponsored education in Malaysia and Trang reinforces the key roles it has played in serving as glue holding an ethnic Chinese community together, reinforcing ethnic identity, and connecting Chinese communities.

### The impact of Hat Yai's Chinese-sponsored schools on the younger generation

How successful has Chinese-sponsored education in Hat Yai been in influencing the ethnic identity of Thai-Chinese youth? Results of interviews and surveys indicate that the efforts of the older generation to pass on an appreciation of Chinese heritage are bearing some fruit. The venerated community leader, Mr. Nikhom, identified the maintenance of cultural identity as a main objective of the Chinese-sponsored schools. Judging by the popularity of the schools and their language and cultural activities, along with survey responses, they appear to be successfully maintaining awareness and respect for the community's Chinese legacy, while simultaneously forces of modernization and assimilation produce a distinct Thai-Chinese blended culture. Teacher interviews reveal that students, especially the Thai-Chinese, are eager to learn the language and heritage. Administrators at both Khunathaam Wittaya and Srinakorn indicated that demand to get into the Chinese-language programs is greater than supply. Participation in culture-related activities is enthusiastic and they are well attended. The importance of the schools to those students identifying themselves as Thai-Chinese can be seen in the survey results.

In response to the question "How important are the following items (education,

language, friends, ancestors, art and music, food, religion and associations) in making you feel that you are a part of the Thai-Chinese cultural group?” education ranked number one, followed by language and friends, all of which the students experience at the schools. As an interesting contrast, a separate survey of ethnic Chinese-associated organization members in Hat Yai showed that the older generation of Thai-Chinese strongly identified ancestors as being important to their identification, followed by language, organization membership and religion. This may indicate that younger people do not feel as connected to their ancestral heritage, or it may just result from their attention being focused on those areas most immediate to their daily lives. The process of internalizing vital aspects of Chinese cultural identity would necessarily take time and effort via the external influences that help teach these values—education and formal Chinese language training.

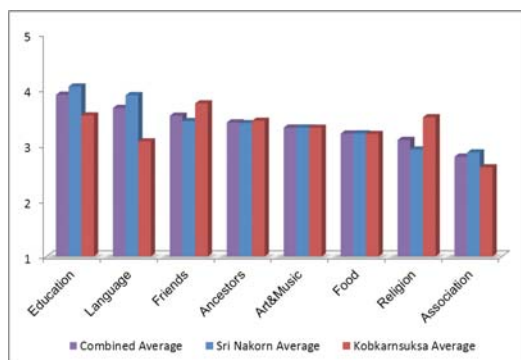


Chart 3. Students identifying as Chinese: factors making them feel part of Thai-Chinese cultural group; scale from 1=not important, to 5=very important (45 responses)

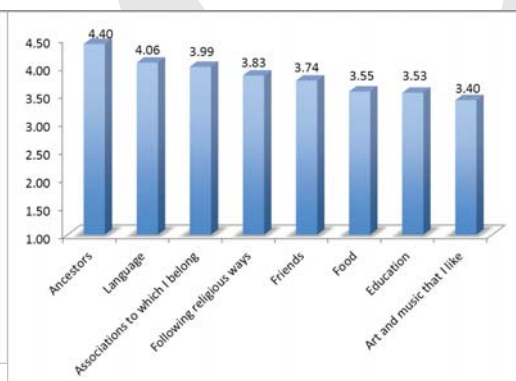


Chart 4. Organization members importance of various elements to feeling part of Thai-Chinese culture (100 responses)

Although Thai-Chinese students show interest in the Chinese background of their community, ethnicity does not appear to figure very prominently in their self-identity. When asked, “If you were to explain to others who you are, which items are most important?”, the general population of students did not rate ethnic identity as high as family (which came in a strong first), personal interests or language. However, the combined average student rating of the importance of ethnicity in identifying themselves of 3.55 on a one-to-five scale indicates that students do not completely discount the importance of ethnic identity. Students identifying themselves as Thai-Chinese did not differ significantly from the overall average, in fact rating importance of ethnicity at a slightly lower average of 3.38. Answers to a question about the daily associations of students, another way of measuring identity, indicate that ethnicity does not factor relatively much into socializing with others. Selecting categories in reply to the question, “How much do you tend to spend time socializing with people from the following groups?”, student respondents indicated that they saw a schoolmate relationship as more important than ethnic associations, which students from both schools rated as just under three out of five.

The success so far of the Chinese-sponsored schools and other ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in nurturing a sense of a Chinese heritage community in Hat Yai is

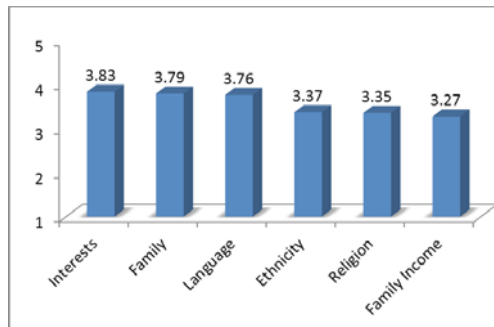


Chart 5. Srinakorn student identity: factors important in explaining who you are; scale from 1=not important to 5=important (70 responses)

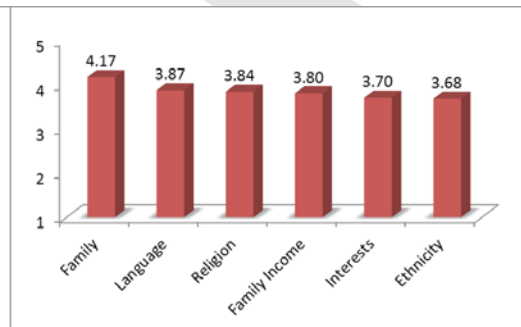


Chart 6. Kobkarnsuksa student identity: factors important in explaining who you are; scale from 1=not important to 5=important (70 responses)

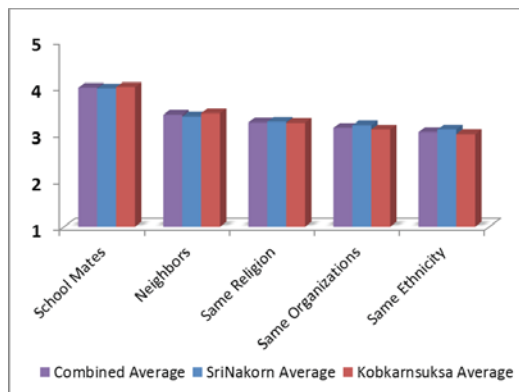


Chart 7. Student identity by association; how much time spent socializing with various groups; responses, Srinakorn=69, Kobkarnsuksa=95

evident in the responses to the following question: “How much do you feel there is a state of being a Chinese or Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai?” Both Thai-Chinese students and organization members felt fairly strongly that there is still a sense of Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai. Moreover, the Thai-Chinese students acknowledge the important role of the schools and other Chinese-affiliated organizations in preserving the sense of a Thai-Chinese community. When asked, “How important do you think the various organizations are in maintaining values, culture, and traditions of Chinese ancestors?”, all categories of organizations received an average from three to above four on the scale of one-to-five, with the language and lineage associations receiving the highest rating. These results indicate that the students still see the schools and other ethnic Chinese organizations as playing a significant role in maintaining a Thai-Chinese community.

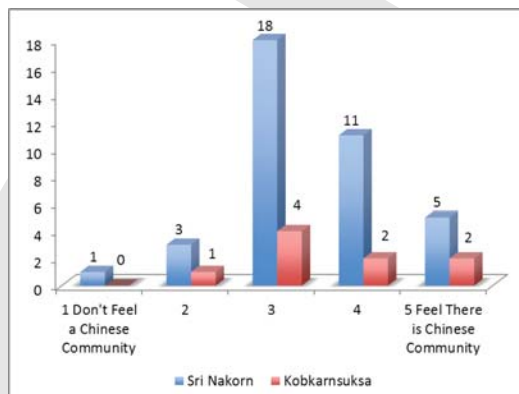


Chart 8. Ethnic Chinese students feeling of Thai-Chinese community; responses, Srinakorn=38, Kobkarnsuksa=9

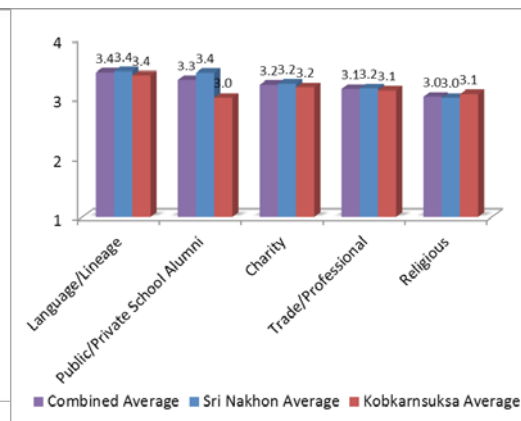


Chart 9. Importance of organizations to maintaining cultural identity (responses=50)

In addition to the survey results, interviews with Thai-Chinese members of the community reveal an enthusiasm of the younger generation for their Chinese identity. A third-generation Thai-Chinese female, aged in her late twenties, back in Hat Yai from her Master's degree studies in Wuhan, PRC, described the sense of a blended culture community this way: "The community is a mixture of Thai and Chinese identity. You can still see Chinese language, Chinese food, and various ceremonies of Chinese people in places with Thai people. Young people, including myself, grew up with training in both Chinese and Thai, so that we understand both cultures." Another second-generation Thai-Chinese female, in her mid-thirties, said that she felt it was "very important" to identify with her heritage "because in culture ethnic Thai-Chinese have customs passed on from the ancestors to the generation of the mother and father and succeeding generations. This is a beautiful thing, and should be preserved together into the future." As for what she sees as the characteristics the Thai-Chinese community, they are "hard-working and diligent, honest, patient. Chinese who are Thai-Chinese nationality are a people who have patience and diligence so much that it has made Thai-Chinese in Thailand and China be number one in Asia."

Such enthusiastic remarks reflect the contribution of Chinese-sponsored schools, as well as other Chinese organizations, in passing on an essence of Chinese culture to the younger Thai-Chinese generation. Forces of modernization and pressure to assimilate, on the other hand, pose serious challenges to preserving ethnic identity. Modernization, for example, has spurred change to practices in and the structure of the family. As an official of the Srinakorn Foundation relates, first-generation Chinese would usually marry within the same Chinese language group. By the second generation, they might still seek out Chinese marriage partners, but language group was not important; and some would marry Thai spouses. By the third generation, he saw that choice of marriage partners for most people had nothing to do with ethnicity...a sentiment shared by the majority of interviewees. (Srinakorn School Alumni Association Thai Secretary, 2011)

The older generation of Thai-Chinese residents often expressed concern that key Chinese values were not being passed on to the younger generation. The president of the Hat Yai Hakka Association fretted that the younger generation was losing the entrepreneurial spirit, and the president of the Chinese-affiliated Tourist Business Federation observed a decreasing spirit of volunteerism among the younger generation. As family size has decreased, children of Thai-Chinese experience a family life that is



Chart 10. Students plan to join an organisation; 49 respondents

able to focus more on them personally—without a large number of siblings competing for family resources, these younger generation children are sent to private schools, given private tutoring lessons, and generally enjoy a greater wealth of attention and resources than was available to their parents' generation—perhaps a factor in producing a generation that is less interested in the communal activities of the Thai-Chinese volunteer



organizations, which are probably seen as old fashioned and irrelevant to many of them. Of the forty-nine Thai-Chinese students who responded to the question of whether they planned to join a Thai-Chinese related organization in the future, a mere 10 percent said that they probably would.

Indeed, ethnic Chinese organization leaders expressed their worries over the declining interest of the young generation in the voluntary associations. According to officers in the Hokkien Association, many age groups still participate in the Association and feel the importance of being ethnic Chinese, although the newly elected Association president is concerned that the younger generations may not find the Association relevant. The Hokkien Association manager also expressed that Chinese traditions have changed because older people with specialist knowledge pass away without passing on their knowledge. The Hat Yai Chinese-sponsored schools certainly face a tough challenge to answer these concerns of the older generation. In most aspects, education at the Chinese-sponsored schools does not differ greatly from other public or private schools in the Thai education system. Following a Thai-language curriculum in a modern milieu of Thai and Western media, the school leaders face an uphill battle to charge their Thai-Chinese students with enthusiasm for their ancestral origins.

## Conclusion

Through decades of adversity, ethnic Chinese citizens in Hat Yai adapted to Thai culture, yet held to the vision of transmitting knowledge and respect of their ancestral heritage to their successors via formal educational institutions. Srinakorn Foundation School in particular continues to serve as a central gathering place to celebrate Chinese traditions, with its new Thai-Chinese cultural center only enhancing its role. Though only a portion of the curriculum, distinctive Chinese cultural values can still be transmitted via the unique nature of Chinese language. Just as importantly, the schools provide opportunities to experience external relationships with other ethnic Chinese communities. These connections broaden the students' worldview and contacts, while strengthening their sense of being connected to others through a common link of a Chinese cultural background. Born as a heavily Chinese-influenced town, Hat Yai maintains a distinctive characteristic as a community that recognizes and promotes its Thai and Chinese character, with Chinese-sponsored schools playing a significant role in binding, educating, and connecting Hat Yai's community.

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# The Lahu-speaking Peoples of the Yunnan-Indochina Borderlands: A Threefold Religious Heritage and its Consequent Syncretisms<sup>1</sup>

Anthony R. Walker

## Abstract

Over the centuries many Tibeto-Burman speaking Lahu highland communities have been influenced by, and sometimes been incorporated into, a way of life pervaded by Buddhist ideas and practices—of both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions. But those who, to varying degrees, have accepted aspects of Buddhism, seldom, if ever, have entirely abandoned their ancestral ‘animo-theism’.

Since the late 19th century and continuing to the present day, Christianity—first in its Protestant, and subsequently Roman Catholic, manifestation—has impacted greatly on many Lahu communities, the consequence of active proselytization, initially in Northern Thailand but subsequently in Burma, China and Laos. Christianity has been less tolerant of syncretism than has Buddhism; nonetheless, many beliefs rooted in their ancestral animism survive in Lahu Christian communities.

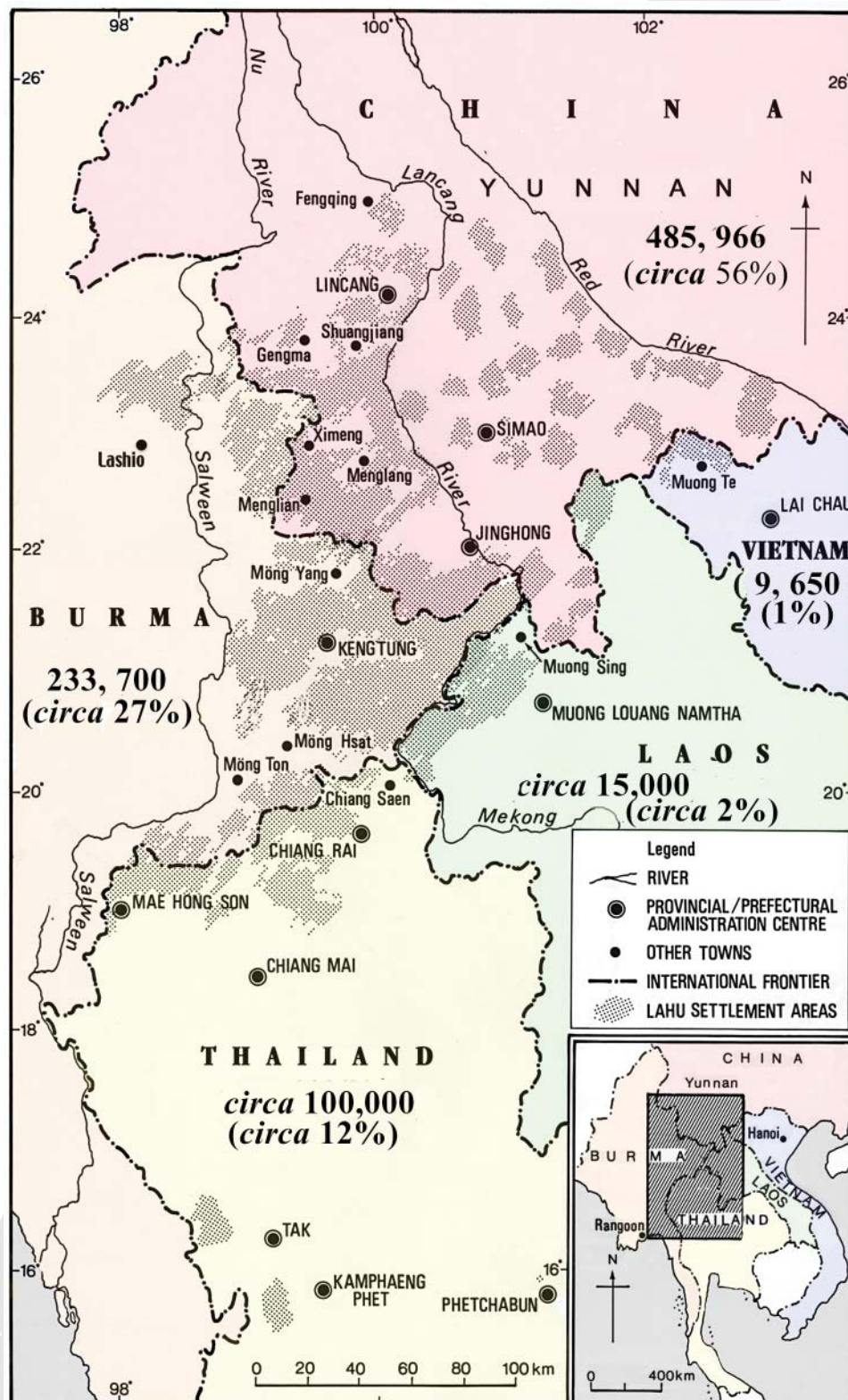
This paper discusses the principal characteristics of Lahu animo-theism as the bedrock of Lahu ethnic religion, explores the history of the associations various Lahu-speaking communities have had with varieties of Buddhism and Christianity and, finally, highlights those areas of their religious culture that demonstrate the extent to which they have succeeded in syncretizing old and new ideas concerning the realm of the extra-mundane.

## Introduction

There are, perhaps, in excess of 800,000<sup>2</sup>—mostly mountain-dwelling—people,

<sup>1</sup> I prepared a version of this paper for the ‘Sixth South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Religion’ meetings held in Colombo, Sri Lanka (June 4-7, 2015). In the event, I did not attend the conference; nonetheless, this paper reflects its theme, viz. *Heritage in the History, Culture and Religion of South and Southeast Asia*.

<sup>2</sup> The total figure can only be an estimate due, especially, to very imprecise data for Burma (Myanmar), which, after China, certainly has the largest Lahu population. The 2010 census in China counted 485,966 Lahu (Seac & Guo 2014:7); for Burma a 1993 estimate given by *Asia Harvest*, a Christian missionary website, is 125,000 (Anon. n.d.[c]), but more recent estimates listed by another Christian website, the *Joshua Project*, give 223,000 for ‘Lahu’ (probably Lahu Na or Black Lahu) (Anon. n.d. [d]) and 11,700 for Lahu Shi (Yellow Lahu) (Anon. n.d. [e]), thus a total of 233,700; for Thailand, recent figures range from 80,000 (Corner n.d.) to 100,000 (Anon. n.d. [f]); for Laos a 1995 estimate gives 15,000 (Anon. n.d.[g]); for Vietnam a 2009 figure is 9,651



Map 1. Distribution of the Lahu-speaking peoples across the Yunnan-Northern Southeast Asia Borderlands



whose mother tongue is one or another of the dialects of Lahu, a Tibeto-Burman language within the Yi (Luoluo) branch of that family. They live in the uplands that constitute much of the borderlands of southwestern Yunnan and the four Southeast Asian states of Burma, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand (see Map). A small diaspora—originally from northwest Laos—now lives in North America, mostly in southern California, but also in Minnesota and North Carolina (Anon. n.d. [a]).

There are many culturally significant divisions among the Lahu peoples (cf. Walker 2003: 91-100)<sup>3</sup>. Those mentioned in this paper are the Lahu Na or Black Lahu, the Lahu Shi or Yellow Lahu (essentially, dialect- and area-based divisions) and the Lahu Nyi or Red Lahu and the Lahu Shehleh (etym. obs.), both divisions belonging to the larger Lahu Na language group).

The underlying world view of these Lahu people is animistic and polytheistic (see below), but over the centuries many Lahu communities have been influenced by Buddhist ideas and practices—of both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions; some in effect, have become Buddhists. But those who have accepted Buddhism, either wholly or in part, have seldom entirely abandoned their ancestral ‘animo-theism’.

### The fundamentals of Lahu animism

Upfront, I must insist the label ‘animism’ not be taken as a synonym for ‘primitive religion’, a concept more-or-less impossible to define from any useful cross-cultural perspective, nor as the religion of so-called ‘primitive people’, a patronizing term which most modern-day anthropologists prefer to shun. Rather, animism describes a worldview premised on the supposition that all culturally-significant phenomena in the visible and tangible worlds comprise material form and non-material ‘spirit essence’. Surely this is no less reasonable a belief than one that posits the existence of an intervening deity?

Beyond the simple duality—material form/spirit essence—there is another that distinguishes between unremarked spirit essence and remarked in-dwelling ‘animo’. This last is an Esperanto word I have borrowed from American anthropologist Morton Klass (1995: 101) because it usefully combines the notions of ‘spirit’ (in Lahu, *ne*) and ‘soul’ (Lahu *aw, ha*) in reference to what Klass (*ibid.*) terms the ‘incorporeal dimension’ with which animistic peoples endow ‘some or all humans, ... some or all living things, ... [and] some or all material entities.’

Unremarked spirit essence *ipso facto* is unnamed and without a set of defining characteristics. But when a collectivity of Lahu single out a particular phenomenon as being of special significance to them, it is quite likely that its ‘incorporeal dimension’—its animo—will be named and provided with a range of defining characteristics. The range of ‘remarked phenomena’ with personalized animo Lahu identify as *aw, ha* or ‘souls’, includes human beings, animals, crops and farming equipment, while those

(Anon. n.d.[f]) and for the United States, 10,000 (Anon. n.d.[g]). Using the higher Burmese and Thai estimates, these figures add up to 863,317; with the lower ones, the total comes to 725,617. I suspect the higher figure is closer to the truth.

<sup>3</sup> My early attempt in this journal (Walker 1974) to bring some order into the confused picture of Lahu sub-ethnic divisions needs by now considerable revision.





whose personalized animo they term *nẽ* or ‘spirits’ embrace mountains (cf. Walker 1977b, 2015), rivers (cf. Walker 1976c; 2011zf), trees (cf. Walker 1982), sun (cf. Walker 1976d), moon, rainbow (cf. Walker 1977a), lightning (cf. Walker 1977c), landslides, roads, domestic hearths, old Buddhist temples (Walker 1981b), and so on. But what is marked as significant by one group of Lahu may not necessarily be so viewed by another. For example, I never heard the Lahu Nyi of my study villages in northern Thailand talking of, or performing, ritual activity directed towards, the *yã k’aw nẽ*, the ‘pathway (or road) spirit’, or to the *ã mi\_ nẽ*, literally ‘fire spirit’ but especially associated with the domestic hearth; both of these supernatural entities are mentioned repeatedly in Chinese-language ethnographic accounts of the Lahu in Yunnan (see, *inter alia*, Guo 1991: 24, 79; Liu 1990: 373; Luo 1992: 119; Song 1985: 210). This is just as I would expect, given that diverse Lahu communities, or even the same community at different points in time, likely will select a somewhat different range of phenomena that, to them, are of special significance.

Quite logically, the Lahu view an in-dwelling animo, whether ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’, as ‘owner’ (Lahu, *aw\_ sheh\_ hpã*) of the material phenomenon within which it dwells. Consequently, if Lahu want to make use of the material form—be it a tree, a piece of land, a section of a waterway, etc.—it stands to reason they must first seek its owner’s permission. And this precisely is what Lahu traditionalists do when, for example, they wish to clear a new swidden (cf. Walker 1978a), or to set up a new village (cf. Walker 1983). Thus, Lahu Nyi farmers with whom I lived in North Thailand, before clearing a stretch of forest to make way for a new rice swidden, would pray like this (cf. Walker 1978a:720-722 for the full text, including original Lahu language):

Oh spirits of the waters, spirits of the rocks, spirits of the hills, spirits of the streams here at this place, I bring for you uncooked rice and beeswax candles and I inform you of my wish to cut a rice swidden. I request your permission, oh spirits of this place, so please receive these offering that I have prepared with my own hands. And so on.

Before building a new village, the Lahu Nyi village headman prays to the spirit of the locality like this (cf. Walker 1983: 175-178 for the full text in Lahu and English translation):

Ah ho! We people of this community bring for you here at this place beautiful beeswax candles and beautiful rice prepared by our own hands; here at this place we buy, we barter for this hill so that we may live here.

[Opposite page]

Figure 1 (top left). A Lahu Nyi (Red Lahu) spirit master in North Thailand raising a basket holding cloth and items of silver jewellery as offerings to his super-mundane patron.

Figure 2 (top right). Lahu Tabon spirit master in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, performing spirit propitiation rite involving the sacrifice of a chicken (corpse circled in black) and offering its blood (in two small teacups) at entrance of symbolic house; the spirit master throws the wooden divining sticks (circled in red) to determine whether or not the sacrifice has been accepted.

Figure 3 (below). Following sacrifice of chicken, the Lahu Na spirit master (in Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, Yunnan) throws wooden divining sticks to determine success or failure of sacrificial rite.

Here at this place, under your feet and under your hands, we buy and we barter, so lord, great lord, pure lord, if your dwelling place is here, please move away to the bottom or to the top [of this hill].

...

Three times in one day, three times in one night, shield and protect each one of us from [sharp] points of iron and copper, from [sharp] points of wood; shield, protect and save us from all sickness and death by [sharp] points.

...

The entire village community will live here, the senior village headman will live here; oh, if you should have your dwelling place here, we beseech you to move away to the top or to the bottom [of this place], oh lord, pure lord of this place.

In some cases—through appropriate propitiation—the spirit owner is believed to become the super-mundane guardian of those who honour and propitiate it. For example, the *animo* of a particular mountain, through propitiation (during which prayers are uttered like the one just above) becomes the spirit guardian of the people who live and farm, herd and gather, and hunt and fish in this locality (cf. Walker 2015). During the period of their residence here, the community addresses its guardian/s as *cao tu' cao ui\_ cao yaw' cho ka ve*, meaning 'great lord/s of this place' (number is imprecisely stated and, I suspect, not even considered).

So the in-dwelling *animo* may become guardian or protector of people closely associated with it; at the same time, should people malign or neglect that *animo*, either wantonly or by accident, Lahu believe it quite as capable of causing harm as it is of offering protection. Many are the times a Lahu spirit diagnostician informs his client that an angered water spirit, forest spirit, tree spirit or other such super-mundane entity is the cause of his or her sickness or other misfortune. Sometimes a person is said to have offended the spirit by failing to offer appropriate ritual respect; but more often, it would seem, spirits are believed to act capriciously. Dozens of men, women and children may, for example, cross a particular waterway without mishap; then one falls sick and people say he or she has probably been 'bitten' (in Lahu '*che ve*') by the resident water spirit.

In-dwelling *animo*, whether spirits (*ne'*) of natural phenomena, like forests, waterways, lightning, rainbow, etc., or souls (*aw ha*) of people, animals, or even guns, may be rendered quiescent through appropriate propitiation, but only so long as the *animo* remains bound to the material phenomenon it customarily inhabits. If *animo* and material counterpart separate, the former becomes what Benjamin (1979:10)—writing in the context of the beliefs of the indigenous peoples of the Malay Peninsula—terms a 'free spirit'. Although Lahu do not consider all free spirits as invariably maleficent, they certainly view a number of such super-mundane entities as potentially very dangerous (see below).

With respect to human beings (*chaw ya'*), Lahu (in company with most peoples in their part of the world) believe that when physical body (*aw to*) and immaterial soul (*aw ha*) are tightly bound one to another, the individual lives in safety, good health and in accordance with the norms of society. In stark contrast, when a person's *aw ha* escapes from his or her body, Lahu believe this presages danger and sickness, or psychological and social abnormality.



The normal, healthy, relationship between human body and *aw ha*, Lahu say, may be disturbed in a number of ways. The first, and most common, is when the *aw ha* deserts its material anchor. On occasion, Lahu say, an *aw ha* may be frightened away from its bodily anchor due to its owner having suffered some terrifying experience, for example by unexpectedly encountering a dangerous animal or strange person in the forest, by experiencing a close brush with death, etc. Alternatively, they may attribute soul loss to the *aw ha*'s desire to be somewhere else—frequently with a deceased loved one—or else claim that, due to its less than sturdy condition, the *aw ha* has fallen victim to the machinations of a malicious spirit. In everyday language Lahu describe this latter situation as the spirit having ‘bitten’ (*che ve*) its victim. But in the language of prayer, as often as not, the offending spirit will be addressed with words that indicate they believe it to have ‘captured’, not merely ‘bitten’, the *aw ha*. For example:

If you have set this person's soul in your iron prison, if you have put it into your copper prison [in this case, ‘iron and copper’ constitute a poetic couplet signifying ‘strong’], please now release this soul; do not punish this poor and unworthy person!

Whether it is said that the *aw ha* has voluntarily abandoned its material counterpart, or that it has been carried away by a malicious spirit, the Lahu's required antidote is a soul recall rite (*ha* [or *aw ha*] *hku ve*). Indeed, calling back the souls of human beings is an ubiquitous aspect of the Lahu peoples' traditional ritual response to misfortune. Among the Lahu Nyi with whom I lived in North Thailand, a ritual specialist—almost always a male elder of the community and one familiar with the verbal and manual intricacies of the rite—was in charge of the proceedings which, in order to assuage the embarrassment of the returning soul, people said, invariably took place after dark. Omitting the liturgical details (for which see Walker 1972a [which includes the original Lahu language texts]; also Walker 2003:186-192), the following words the officiant addresses to the wandering or captured *aw ha* encapsulate the essence of the recall rite:

Tonight, this good night, the time is not ripe for you to tarry in the land of the dead, the time is not ripe for you to tarry in the land of sickness! Tonight come back! By morn tomorrow be back in the house!

...

Oh soul, tonight, this good night, do not linger in the land of the dead, do not linger in the land of sickness! ... Come back now to the side of the master of this house, come back now to the side of the mistress of this house!

Do not follow the path of death; do not take the path of sickness. Tonight, this good night, listen to the sounds of the rice mortars in the village and come back! Listen to the sounds of the cocks and the hens and come back! By morn tomorrow be back in the house, come back!

Tonight, this good night, oh soul, ...take this ... silver that we have fashioned with our own hands and come back! Put this silver into your feet, put this silver into your hands and come back!

Much less frequently, the souls of other entities, such as guns, crops and animals, are also recalled. Thus, Lahu hunters call back the souls of their precious hunting guns when they constantly fail to hit their target; no amount of fine marksmanship, they say, will enable a hunter to bag a game animal until the soul of his gun has been recalled in the rite known as *na*<sup>^</sup> ‘gun’ *ha* (from *aw* *ha*) ‘soul’, *hku ve* ‘to call’ (Walker 1978b for details). Similarly, if the soul of the rice crop, the *ca ha* or *ca aw* *ha*, leaves the crop, the Lahu farmer must be sure to recall it (cf. Liu 1994:5 6-58), otherwise no amount of hard work on his and his household members’ part will ensure a good yield from the seed stock planted in the following year.

Sometimes, however, when people, crops, or domestic animals are struck by disease, Lahu believe it is not soul recall that is required but rather the propitiation or exorcism of the spirit or spirits (*ne*<sup>~</sup>) believed to have caused the problem. Lahu classify both attached and unattached spirits as *ne*<sup>~</sup>, but consider the latter potentially much more dangerous than the former.

Many ethnographic accounts of Lahu animism (my own included, cf. Walker 1976: 380-381) attempt to classify according to certain hermeneutical categories the various *ne*<sup>~</sup> that Lahu recognize: e.g. ‘guardian spirits’ (of house, village, field, locality, game animals), ‘nature spirits’ (of mountains, waterways, rocks, trees, sun, moon, lightning, whirlwind, rainbow), ‘spirits of demoniacal possession’ and ‘spirits of the bad dead’—all these within my classification—while Chinese authors, like Liang Kesheng 梁克生 and his co-writers (1992, Ch. 9, pp. 15-17), list ‘nature spirits’, ‘spirits of the bad dead’, ‘spirits released through sorcery’ and ‘vampire spirits’.

All such classifications, it must be emphasized, are not indigenous ones, but rather have been imposed on the ethnographic data by outside observers. The Lahu themselves, so far as I have been able to gauge, if compelled to classify at all, talk only of ‘good spirits’ (*da* *ve ne*<sup>~</sup>) and ‘bad spirits’ (*ma*<sup>~</sup> *da* *ve ne*<sup>~</sup>), while recognizing that some ‘good spirits’ are, on occasion, harmful and some *ne*<sup>~</sup> (for example, the charcoal spirit or *shī* *g’eu* *ka*<sup>~</sup> *-eh ne*<sup>~</sup> of my study community) essentially are neither good nor bad.

One of the best general descriptions of the Lahu concept of *ne*<sup>~</sup>, in my opinion, comes from the pen of Chinese scholar Zhang Qiang 张强 (1994: 46-47), who, in a paper more directly concerned with the Lahu concept of *G’ui* *sha* than with the *ne*<sup>~</sup>, has this to say about the spirits:

The *ni* 尼 (= *ne*<sup>~</sup>) have no specific form, nor are there different classes of them. Each one has its own function and is not subordinate to any other one of them. But human beings must not offend these *ni*, otherwise misfortune will befall them and the beauty of the human world will be destroyed [Chinese poetic language]. For example, the Lahu believe that those people who are killed by being struck by lightning, by drowning or by fire have offended one or another kind of *ni*. Thus it is very common among the Lahu to have various kinds of ritual activity through which to request protection from the *ni*. Nonetheless, the physical form of a particular *ni* cannot be described. The people will come to know of the benevolence or malevolence of a *ni* only when they experience fortune or misfortune.

Lahu seem, generally, to fear more acutely those spirits associated in one way or another with people—dead or alive—than those associated with non-human phenomena. Among the Lahu Nyi with whom I lived, among the most feared spirits were said to be the *meh* and *mvuh*, both associated with those who had died ‘bad deaths’ (in Lahu *suh mā da ve chaw*), and the *gu*<sup>^</sup> spirits that some people (cf. Walker 2003: 144 n 71) likewise thought were associated with the ‘bad dead’, but others believed to be spirits released by sorcerers for the purpose of harming their victims (the latter explanation seemingly is the more common one, even among Lahu Nyi [cf. Nishimoto 2003: 131]). Then there were the *chaw tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>* (Lahu Nyi dialect; Lahu Na, *taw<sup>^</sup>*) or ‘human *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>*’ (the most feared of three categories of *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>* spirit, cf. Walker 2003: 155) and, indeed, the most feared of all human-related spirits. They are said to be the familiar spirits of people who are inherently evil, although not through any fault of their own. My Lahu informants recognized that such people have no means of ridding themselves of the evil entity they host; that in fact, they are probably quite unaware they host a *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>*. For these reasons, I believe we may usefully employ the term ‘witch’ to translate the Lahu designation ‘*suh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>/taw<sup>^</sup> caw<sup>^</sup> ve chaw*’.<sup>4</sup>

In the Lahu Nyi community I studied, people told of how a witch’s *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>* would periodically leave its host’s body, either as an immaterial spirit, or else in the form of a cat, or some other animal, in order to cause injury. The *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>* (or *taw<sup>^</sup>*), it is said, may either bite its victim (in this case, literally), or else enter his or her body, thereby upsetting the soul-body relationship described above. The bite of a *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>*, my Lahu informants told me, is usually fatal; moreover, so they said, teeth marks sometimes may be seen on the victim’s neck. Nobody is able to observe an attacking *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>*, they declared, except for the victim, who sometimes identifies its human host. In this event, it may be expected the named ‘witch’ will be driven out of the village forcefully. If a *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>* is believed to have invaded the victim’s body, the situation is very dangerous, although not necessarily fatal. As already noted, the host cannot expel the spirit, but a *ne<sup>~</sup> te sheh<sup>^</sup> hpa<sup>~</sup>* or ‘spirit master’, it is told, may be able to do so.

Exorcism and, more commonly, propitiation are the means by which Lahu counter the machinations of malicious spirits. As therapies, exorcism and propitiation may be employed in conjunction with, or quite apart from, soul recall. For example, somebody falls sick and a soul recall rite is performed. The sickness persists. A ritual diagnostician (see Walker 2003: 183-186) determines that the patient has been ‘bitten’ by the lightning spirit (*mvuh<sup>~</sup> hteh<sup>^</sup> ne<sup>~</sup>*). The appropriate propitiatory rite is performed (Walker 1977c for details). The patient fails to recover. Another diagnostician is consulted. This time it is the rainbow spirit (*a<sup>-</sup> la<sup>~</sup> mi shi<sup>^</sup> jaw ne<sup>~</sup>*) that is identified as responsible and a second

<sup>4</sup> I may still be under too great an influence of the East Africanists, who were the majority of my teachers of social anthropology at Oxford. I am certainly aware that the clear-cut distinction between a witch—as a passive generator of evil—and a sorcerer—as an active practitioner of malign magic, is not as clear-cut in many parts of the world as it was reported to be among many East African people (cf. Middleton & Winter 1963: 8-9, 12). I do, however, find the terminological dichotomy applicable to the Lahu situation, where a *tsuh<sup>-</sup> tsuh<sup>~</sup>/taw<sup>^</sup> caw<sup>^</sup> ve chaw* may usefully be distinguished as a ‘witch’, from a *maw<sup>^</sup> pa<sup>^</sup>* (spirit specialist), who is commissioned to perform sorcery (cf. Walker 2003: 292-292).



Figure 4. Lahu Nyi wooden spirit-offering post with leaf cup containing rice grains and beeswax candles for the spirit(s)

propitiatory rite performed (Walker 1977a for details). And so it goes on until the patient recovers or dies (or seeks alternative medical assistance (Lahu herbal, Tai herbal or ritual, Chinese traditional and modern Western are all possibilities open to one or another Lahu community in modern times).

It is quite beyond the bounds set for this paper to describe in detail Lahu spirit propitiatory and exorcistic rites. Instead, I shall offer only two, very much abbreviated, examples. For a propitiatory rite, I consider *sha\_law\_ ve*, 'praying for game' by propitiating the spirit guardian of the wild animals (one of the attributes of the resident mountain spirit or *hk'aw ne*). For a spirit exorcism, I choose *jaw pa\_jaw ma g'a\_ ve*, 'driving away the male and female *jaw* spirits'.

At its simplest, the Lahu Nyi *sha\_law\_ ve* rite<sup>5</sup> involves setting up a wooden or bamboo offering post (*sho lo*), about 150 centimetres high (Fig. 4), at a spot in the forest where the propitiator has come across game tracks. Atop this post is a leaf cup (*u cu\_lu*), into which the propitiator has put offerings to the spirit: some unlit beeswax candles, a few raw, but husked, rice grains, a little salt and a

few chilli peppers. He is now ready to chant the propitiatory prayers, extracts of which are as follows (Walker 1976b: 219-222 for the original Lahu language text):<sup>6</sup>

Oh today at this place I offer this silver, this golden altar, you who watch over a thousand wild boars, a thousand wild sows on the right hand side, you who watch over a million wild boars and sows on the left hand side, great lord of this place. Oh I ask for wild boars and sows, I ask for stag barking deer and doe barking deer and today bring for you these offerings, which I place under your feet and under your hands.

...

I put my request under your feet and under your hands; let me have wild boars and wild sows, stag barking deer and doe barking deer, give me flesh that I can divide up [i.e. large game sufficient to share with all the villagers, as custom dictates], give me flesh to eat; today, before the setting of the sun, give me flesh to eat; receive these offerings.

<sup>5</sup> See Walker 2003: 233-237 for a more detailed account, not restricted to Lahu Nyi, and Walker 1976b for a detailed account of the Lahu Nyi rite, including Lahu language texts.

<sup>6</sup> James Matisoff (2009: 121-134) has re-edited and re-translated the first of the two texts in my original paper and published it as the principal content of a chapter for a book honoring my late wife, Pauline Hetland Walker.



For my example of an exorcistic rite, viz. *jaw pa\_jaw ma g'a\_ ve* ‘driving away the male and female *jaw*’, I need to explain certain traditional Lahu Nyi cosmological ideas. Lahu tradition—probably derived from Tai neighbours (cf. Milne 1910: 201)—has it that a solar eclipse comes about when a celestial tiger eats the sun (*mvuh\_ nyi* [sun] *la\_* [tiger] *ca\_ ve* [eats], while a lunar eclipse is caused by a celestial frog eating the moon (*ha pa* [moon] *pa\_* [frog] *ca\_ ve* [eats]). Lahu Nyi tradition (whether or not modern-day Lahu give credence to it) relates that, on such occasions, the blood of the sun or moon falls down to earth, where it is caught on treetops. Here the drops of blood transmute into malicious *jaw ne\_* or *jaw* spirits. If and when a Lahu villager fells those trees, either to build a new house or to repair an old one, unwittingly he may bring some of these malicious ‘free spirits’ back home with him. Here they will continue to dwell—a threat to the household members’ health and good fortune—until they are driven out.

*Jaw* spirits must be exorcised by spirit masters, who need to make fairly elaborate preparations for the ritual banishment. From wild banana root the spirit master must carve, or at least oversee the carving of fairly crude representations of a horse and an elephant (Fig. 5)—transport on which the spirits will be dispatched. From strips of split-bamboo cane he or an assistant(s) weaves *leh-o\_* (usually considered guards against malicious spirits but on this occasion said to be gifts for the *jaw*) as well as head rings, which the household members wear during the exorcism and into which, informants explained, any *jaw* spirits remaining in their bodies will enter; at the conclusion of the ritual activity, the spirit master discards these rings outside the village area. From strands of *zuh* (cogon grass = *Imperata cylindrica*) the spirit master, or one who is assisting him with the preparations, weaves a symbolic *vui\_ naw* (lit. ‘green snake’, i.e. the green pit viper (*Trimeresurus popeorum*); also a replica human corpse, wrapped in a piece of white cloth. Some of my informants ventured the opinion that the symbolic snake is fabricated to strike fear into the *jaw*, but I would lean towards an interpretation of the artefact as somehow being symbolic of these spirits themselves. This is because, when Lahu Nyi actually observe this species of snake climbing on a house roof, they take it as a sure sign that *jaw ne\_* are present in the dwelling. As for the replica corpse, all seemed to concur that it was a substitute for the real thing—that which the *jaw* spirits really seek. Finally, from branches of two different species of tree: *chi\_ hpu* or Chinkapin (*Castanopsis tribuloides*) and a *yaw* or Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstoemia macrocarpa*), the top of a young wild banana (*a\_ paw\_ naw*, *Musa spp.*) and a long grass called *pa\_ lao\_* (unidentified; found particularly in old swiddens), the spirit master or his assistant fabricates what looks much like a broom. In Lahu it is called a *jaw yeh\_*, meaning *jaw* spirits’ house. It is certainly not a broom, but a collection of materials bound together for the spirits to take away with them so that they may build a rest hut for themselves on what, the Lahu hope, will be their very long journey taking them far away from the Lahu houses they are now inhabiting or—better said—infesting.

After further preparations, including the spirit master’s appeal for assistance from his spirit patron (see Walker 1976a: 386–394, 1985a: 39–40), the *jaw ne\_* are driven

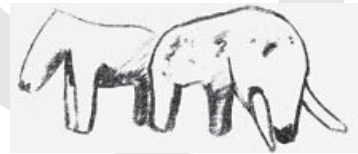


Figure 5. Images of elephant and horse offered as transport for, hopefully, departing malicious spirits (elephant height 14 cm, length 24 cm; horse height 13 cm, length 23 cm)

out of the house. I shall not detail all the ritual actions that accompany the exorcism; I have described them several times elsewhere (Walker 1976a, 1985a, 2005a, b, c). Here, as with the propitiatory rite discussed earlier, I shall concentrate on some stanzas of the principal exorcistic prayer, in the hope that this will adequately convey the underlying principles of spirit exorcism. The spirit master begins (Walker 1985a: 42-46 for the Lahu language text):

A HTO! [words said to frighten the spirits] Today, on this good day, if there are death-dealing *jaw* spirits, illness-bringing *jaw* spirits in these peoples' house, I command that you stand up on your *jaw* feet and depart, you male *jaw* spirits and you female *jaw* spirits, give up [causing trouble] and be gone!

...

Today, on this good day, if I am able to drive [you spirits] away no more than a single time, the divine Pi ya~ [the spirit master's supernatural patron] can drive [you away] nine times!

...

Away yonder, where the heavens end, yonder is a place where in one day you can eat seven kinds [of food]; oh, away yonder, in one day you can drink seven kinds [of drink]!

...

The frog once drank the moon, the tiger once ate the sun, so if there are death-dealing *jaw* spirits, sickness-inflicting *jaw* spirits, lift up your *jaw* feet and depart; you male *jaw* spirits, [you female *jaw* spirits] give up causing trouble and be gone!

...

Away yonder where the moon cannot shine, the sun cannot shine. Away yonder in one day there are seven different kinds of food to eat, seven different kinds of drink! Oh, there is a white market with nine stalls, a red market with nine stalls; there is an eating house and a drinking house!

...

Today, stand up on your *jaw* feet and go; [take this] *a yaw*, lord of trees, and you male *jaw* spirits, [you female *jaw* spirits], cease your trouble-making and go!

...

Today nine *jaw yeh* have been made ready for you; oh, if there are death-dealing *jaw* spirits, sickness-inflicting *jaw* spirits, lift up your *jaw* feet and depart; you male *jaw* spirits, [you female *jaw* spirits], give up causing trouble and be gone!

...

Do not be counted within these people's house with nine rooms; do not be counted within these people's house of nine divisions!

...

Today, this day, if I am able to drive [you spirits] away no more than a single time, the divine Pi ya~ [the spirit master's supernatural patron] can drive [you away] nine times! A HTO! A HTO!

## Lahu theism

I cannot categorize the traditional Lahu worldview, despite its bedrock animism, simply as ‘animistic’. This is because, for as long as I can determine, Lahu communities have entertained notions of *sha* or deities; moreover, a great many (but not all) Lahu-speaking communities have for long exalted a creator-divinity they call G’ui<sub>u</sub> *sha* (the etymology of this word is not entirely clear, but the first syllable *g’ui<sub>u</sub>* may be linked to an ancient Tibeto-Burman root *\*ray*, meaning ‘being’, in the sense of ‘self-existing first cause’ [Matisoff 1988: 1155]).

As a matter of fact, many of the accounts of Lahu metaphysics (including several of my own, *viz.* Walker 1969: 46; 1970: 175-176; 1972b: 249-252; 1975: 336) begin not with its animistic, but rather with its theistic dimension. Thus, Gordon Young, grandson of the pioneer American Baptist missionary among the Lahu in Burma and China (see below), in his 1962 book on the mountain peoples of northern Thailand, begins his account of Lahu Nyi and Lahu Na religion by declaring these two Lahu-speaking peoples to be ‘theistic animists’, because ‘[t]hey believe in a ‘Father God’ who is the creator of all things good’ (Young 1962:10). James Telford, the Scottish-American who succeeded Gordon Young’s grandfather as head of the Baptist mission in Kengtung, Burma, after first declaring the Lahu to be animists, goes on to write (1938: 3-4):

For long decades before the Lahus came in touch with Western civilization and missionaries, they had knowledge of and worshipped a Supreme Being, whom they called *G’ui<sub>u</sub> sha*. In many ... villages there are temple huts, to which the priest ... and villagers go on holy days to worship *G’ui<sub>u</sub> sha*. *This worship of their Supreme Being is entirely different and apart from their animistic beliefs and practices* [emphasis added].

Finally, let me cite three representative Chinese-language sources on Lahu theism. The first is Guo Jiaji 郭家骥 (1991: 73), who writes:

While they [the Lahu] believe all things possess *hun* 魂 (souls), at the same time they have created the idea of an almighty *tian shen* 天神 (sky deity), Esha 厄莎 (= G’ui<sub>u</sub> *sha*), who is able to control all phenomena. ... Esha is ... both omniscient and omnipotent.

Next, we may consider the views of Zhang Xiaosong 张晓松 and Li Gen 李根, who write under the joint pen name ‘Xiaogen’ 晓根 (1994: 41), ‘Not only is he [G’ui<sub>u</sub> *sha*; the Chinese original uses the male pronoun] the creator of everything on earth and in heaven, but he is the one who determines the whole social life of the Lahu people’. The final Chinese author I shall cite here is the aforementioned Zhang Qiang 张强 (1994:46), who writes:

Esha is the creator and is the greatest of all the *shen*. It [no gender is attributed in the Chinese] changed the stagnant and chaotic universe into a vital and colourful

world. It taught human beings how to cultivate and led them away from uncivilized and barbarous times. It safeguarded the lives and the fertility of the Lahu people and their animals. It ensured bumper harvests and a peaceful world.

Of these English and Chinese-language definitions of Lahu theism, only Zhang Qiang talks (I believe correctly) of the creator-divinity G'ui<sub>u</sub> sha as simply 'the greatest of all the deities'. The others, especially those of the Westerners, Gordon Young and James Telford, appear to champion Lahu monotheism, not just theism. But we need also to know that the notion of a high god (the cosmic creator), among a multitude of gods, is not uncommon. Indeed, it is a more or less ubiquitous characteristic of the traditional (ethnic-based) religions of Southeast Asia and the south-western borderlands of China (see Walker 2003: 159-160).

There is, nonetheless, good reason to characterize as unique the theism widespread—but not universal—among the Lahu. This is because, in this part of the world, it is much more common for people to regard their high god, their creator-divinity, as a remote, almost insignificant, supernatural entity in comparison with the much more immediate territorial guardians, sickness-bearing spirits, etc. But this, certainly, is not the case among many Lahu communities, including those I studied in North Thailand, for whom G'ui<sub>u</sub> sha (as also among the Kengtung Lahu described by Telford) is at the very centre of their ritual lives, often with village temples (Fig. 7) and a priestly hierarchy dedicated to the regular worship of this almighty creator-divinity (cf. Walker 1970: 190-194; 1981a; 2003: 362-413, 2006: 122-123). But this admitted and, consequently, the ethnographic stress on Lahu theism in no way discredited, I would venture to say that the ideas and ritual practices concerning G'ui<sub>u</sub> sha in many 20th and 21st century Lahu communities are the result of historical events that occurred in Yunnan from the late 17th to the early 19th century, which, ironically, had to do with the Lahu's encounter with non-monotheistic Buddhism (the details are in the following section). But, what I believe to be the older Lahu theistic ideas are still manifest in several modern-day Lahu communities; American anthropologist Delmos J. Jones (1967: 89) came upon them, I believe, among The Lahu Sheh Leh in North Thailand, for whom, as he writes, 'the concept of God [G'ui<sub>u</sub> sha] is an important element [but], the spirits [*ne*] are more important, for it is they who cause sickness, and it is they who are called upon to cure it. God in the words of the spirit doctor [of one of Jones's study villages] "does not do very much".'

The overriding importance of the G'ui<sub>u</sub> sha concept in many Lahu communities that also maintain parallel beliefs in spirits, and the recognition of this—even though remote—high god in other Lahu communities, whose greater concern is with the spirits, surely is sufficient justification for the use of the term 'animo-theism' to categorize the belief systems of the majority of Lahu-speaking peoples.

### The Lahu people's encounter with Buddhism

The Lahu peoples' encounter with Buddhism has been long and multifaceted, encompassing both major schools: Theravāda and Mahāyāna. I shall begin with the former and treat with the latter subsequently.



As Lahu communities migrated southwards through Yunnan and, some of them, into what are now the Southeast Asian states of Burma, Laos and Thailand, they encountered Theravāda Buddhist Tai (Dai) peoples as their politically-dominant, irrigated rice-farming, lowland neighbours. Several ideological concepts and ritual traditions emanating from these Tai neighbours have slowly—but deeply—penetrated the world views and ritual practices of many southern-dwelling Lahu communities.

A very good example is that of the Lahu Nyi in North Thailand and the Burmese Shan State. The great majority of these communities are not immediately identifiable—nor indeed would they identify themselves—as Theravāda Buddhists. Nonetheless, ideas of merit and demerit (cf. Walker 2003: 123, 283), the making of merit by building rest shelters for weary travellers (cf. Walker 1985b), the absorption of demerit by taking the life of sentient beings (cf. Walker 1984: 281), the observation of a vegetarian diet on certain major ritual occasions (cf. Walker 1981a: 703, 703 n. 66; 1984: 290, 290), the coincidence and naming of principal village temple festivals with Theravāda Buddhist merit days and religious festivals (cf. Walker 1984: 280, 290, 292), the naming of temple officials and temple artefacts after Shan and Northern Thai Buddhist prototypes (cf. Walker 2003: 387-388; 2006: 116-119; 2012: 12-13)—all these, and more, are clearly the consequence of long-term and sustained contact with lowland Buddhist neighbours. There is very little evidence for these accretions having occurred due to formal evangelistic forays into the mountains by members of the Buddhist *Sangha*.

Much less common than such long-term and disparate accretions, but also, it seems, occasionally to be found, are entire Lahu communities that are unambiguously identifiable as Buddhist (even though—as among Tai Buddhists themselves—the animotheistic dimension has almost certainly not been rejected). In the 1960s, for example, I learned from Lahu Na (Black Lahu) Christian informants, who had moved into Thailand from Burma, that there were some Lahu communities in their former homeland that had quite thoroughly adopted the Theravāda Buddhism of their Shan neighbours (as have the Waic-speaking Palaung [cf. Milne 1924: 312-334]), erecting temples and supporting monks and novices in their highland villages. Quite likely, these Theravāda Buddhist Lahu are members of the Lahu Shi or Yellow Lahu division.<sup>7</sup>

More recently in Thailand, some Lahu communities have witnessed more active and formalized Buddhist proselytism, albeit nowhere as intensive as that of Christian missionaries, whether foreign or local (see next section). Under the ‘Dhammacarika Bhikku Programme’ or ‘Monks Travelling Dhamma Programme’, established in 1965 as the joint brainchild of a former monk who had become head of the Department of Public Welfare’s then ‘Hill Tribes Division’ and the abbot of one of Bangkok’s most prestigious monastic institutions, teams usually of five ordained monks—sometimes with lay assistants—began to move into Lahu and other hill communities. Their ultimate goal was to woo these villagers

<sup>7</sup> I note the Christian evangelical website, ‘The Joshua Project’, in its entry for Lahu Shi (Yellow Lahu) in Burma (Anon. n.d.[e]), has 55% of these people as Buddhists (10% are said to be Christians and, presumably, the remaining 35% follow what, elsewhere, the Project rightly classifies as ‘ethnic religion’. The Project’s entry on ‘Lahu [probably Lahu Na or Black Lahu] in Burma’ (Anon. n.d.[d]) has 80% Christian, with no mention of Buddhism at all.

into the Theravāda fold and, consequently, integrate them more fully into the mainstream of national life (cf. Anon. 1973; Lester 1973: 123-124). As Lester (p. 124) describes the scene, '[t]he mission begins with passive presence.' The monks make no attempt to preach the Buddhist *dhamma* and refrain from denigrating local religious customs. 'The Bhikkhus walk into the area ... and quietly settle down explaining only that they have come for the welfare of the people ... [they] carry on the ritual of the monastic life' necessitating five monks in order to perform the twice-monthly lunar rituals. Only if the villagers enquire of them, do the clerics seize the opportunity to begin explaining the principles of Buddhism to them.

Between 1965 and 1969, seven Lahu villages received visits by Dhammacarika Bhikku and between 1968 and 1969, eight Lahu youths ordained as novices in the *Sangha* (see Walker 1970: 68-69). With the establishment of a special 'Monk and Novice Training Centre' on the grounds of Srisoda monastic complex at the foot of Doi Suthep (the mountain that towers above the city of Chiang Mai), additional Lahu youths were admitted to the novitiate (cf. Bhatiasavi 1994).

The Dhammacarika Bhikku Programme certainly has impacted on a number of Lahu communities, hastening their age-old assimilation of Buddhist ideas and ritual, but permitting them to retain traditional beliefs and practices, rather than having to accept 'an exclusive alternative like Christianity' (Wongsprasert 1985: 11 [1988: 132]). So far as I am aware, however, it has not resulted in the development of unambiguous Lahu Buddhist communities, like those said to exist in eastern Burma.

\* \* \*

Southern Lahu associations with Theravāda Buddhism are certainly a significant factor in the religious culture of these people, but their assimilation of Buddhist ideas and ritual practices originating among politically dominant lowland neighbours is not particularly surprising; the same situation is to be found among many other upland peoples, e.g. Palaung (already noted above), Tai Loi (Scott and Hardiman 1900: 517-518, Banhong Wa (Luo 罗 1995: 359-362), Lua' (Kunstader 1965), Khammu (Proshan 1993: 141), Mal/T'in (Dessaint 1973), Pwo Karen in Thailand (Andersen 1976), and several more peoples and sources that space dictates I omit from this paper). What is much more remarkable, however, is the impact Mahāyāna Buddhism (or, more accurately, a particular heterodox sect thereof; see below) has had (and continues to have) on so many Lahu communities—even those living in the Theravāda-dominant southlands, most of whom are unaware of this heritage of Northern Buddhism. How did this situation arise?

Until recently, the story of Mahāyāna Buddhism among the Lahu—both in Chinese and Western writings—has been a very confused one. My own attempts to interpret the muddled picture emerging from the source materials available to me began in the 1980s (see Walker 1985c) and culminated in Chapter Six: 'Mahayana Buddhism in the Lahu Mountains' of my 2003 book *Merit and the Millennium* (this chapter is abridged in Walker 2009 and expanded in Walker 2014: 23-101). In brief, the picture I discerned emerging from the data was one of a Han Chinese monk named Yang Deyuan 杨德渊 and a few fellow clerics



Map 2. Location of Nancha (boxed) and other principal Lahu and Wa Buddhist temples in the Lahu and Wa mountain areas

at the famous monastic retreat on Jizu Mountain 鸡足山, north-east of the Yunnanese city of Dali 大理, sometime during the second half of the 17th century, setting out on a journey that would bring them to the Tai-dominated region of modern-day Lancang 澜沧 County, close to the China-Burma border. Here, in the Luohei Shan 倮黑山, the Lahu Mountains 拉祜山 in modern usage [cf. Walker 2012: 28 n 22], at a place called Nancha 南柵 (Lahu Na<sub>1</sub> ca<sup>8</sup>) in today's largely Wa 佤-occupied Ankang 安康 township of Lancang County, Monk Yang established the first Mahāyāna Buddhist monastic complex that specifically catered to the spiritual and secular needs of the surrounding Wa and Lahu peoples. (The mythology surrounding this event suggests Monk Yang at first wished to build his temple amidst the lowland-dwelling Tai peoples, but their princely rulers would not permit it for fear of compromising their own Theravāda Buddhist tradition [cf. Anon. 1993b: 252].)

Monk Yang succeeded in establishing Nancha both as the principal centre for the dissemination of his teachings among Lahu and Wa and as the headquarters of a theocratic organization of monastic institutions and warrior monks bent on challenging the authority of Tai princes—holders of official appointments from the imperial Qing government—as well as the Qing government's ever-expanding political domination of southwestern Yunnan. Yang Deyuan trained a number of notable disciples, some of whom succeeded him as abbot of Nancha, while others established daughter monasteries in several important areas of Lahu and Wa settlement (Map 2).

I cited several Chinese sources (*inter alia* Li and Yang 2003: 268; Li and Zuo 1983: 28; and Huang 2001: 179) claiming Yang Deyuan to have served as an official of the

<sup>8</sup> The Mandarin pronunciation of this name is 'Nanshan', but it is known as 'Nancha' to the local Lahu and Wa, which is the form I shall use in this paper. The name is said to derive from the dialect of the neighbouring Tai people. Although in Chinese the first part of the name is represented by the character 南, *nan*, meaning 'south', but here representing the Tai word *naam* or 'water', while the character 柵 *shan* is an attempt to represent in Chinese characters the Tai word *chua*, 'bad'. So the name refers to 'the place with a bad water supply'—for the truth of which I can certainly vouch!—(cf. Xu 1993: 265).

pretender Southern Ming dynasty under Emperor Yongli 永历 (r. 1647-1661), before he ordained as a Buddhist monk. It was this background, these sources implied, that explained Monk Yang's anti-Qing sentiments. I mentioned in addition that the work *Lahu Zu Shi* 拉祜族史 [History of the Lahu Nationality], edited by Li Bao 李保 and Yang Wenan 扬文安 (2003: 268), informs us that 'not only was Monk Yang a learned Buddhist monk, but well known also for his medical skills ...', the work declaring that 'wherever he went in the Lahu mountain areas, ... [he] practised medicine, while at the same time propagating the Buddhist doctrine of *pudu zhongsheng* 普度众生 [universal salvation]. In this way he laid down his roots among the Lahu people and gradually ... became a god-like figure in ... [their] minds.' Finally, I noted that, if Yang Deyuan did indeed combine the attributes of a privileged Ming dynasty background, hostility towards the new Qing rulers (as usurpers of Ming authority), the aura of a Buddhist holy man and expertise in medical practice, this would have constituted a heady mix in the minds of the Lahu, a people seemingly predisposed to follow men of obvious religious merit, particularly in their search for health, prosperity and relief from political oppression (cf. Walker 2003: 505-547).

Several Chinese sources declare that Monk Yang's teachings belong to the Mizong 密宗 or esoteric tradition of Buddhism; this identification led me to suggest that Yang might have been stimulated by tantrism, introduced to him during his years of residence in the Jizu Shan monastic complex, a major centre of Tibetan pilgrimage (cf. Walker 2014: 51, 64 n 104).

More recently, the research and writings on Monk Yang Deyuan and his religious milieu at Jizu Shan by Hong Kong-based Yunnanese scholar and Lahu specialist Ma Jianxiong 吗件雄 necessitate that I modify some of my previous suppositions regarding early Buddhist penetration of Lahu society. Of particular importance in this connection is Ma's (2011: ¶¶ 12-15, 23-27)<sup>9</sup> linking of Yang Deyuan (along with other monks associated with him at Jizu Shan) to the heretical teachings—so declared by the Qianlong Emperor in 1746—propagated from Jizu Shan by a Yunnanese Han monk, Zhang Baotai 張保太 (1659-1741) (cf. Seiwert 2003: 405-411).

Zhang Baotai's sect and its teachings were known as Dacheng Zongjiao 大乘宗教 [Big Vehicle Religion] (Seiwert 2003: 406), a designation—by design or by chance—almost identical to the Chinese term for Mahāyāna Buddhism more generally, namely Dacheng Fujiao 大乘佛教, [Big Vehicle Buddha Religion]. (This may be why so many Chinese scholars have identified—or have I misread them as so identifying?—Monk Yang's teaching simply as 'Mahāyāna Buddhism', a usage I have followed thus far in my own writings.) If Ma's, apparently very reasonable, identification of Monk Yang Deyuan's teachings with Zhang Baotai's 'Dacheng Zongjiao' is indeed historically justified (I do not have at hand documentary evidence with which independently to confirm or deny this association), then it is clearly necessary for students of the history of Lahu Buddhism to accept a more restricted interpretation of 'Mahayana Buddhism' for Yang Deyuan's cult than that I have hitherto allowed.

<sup>9</sup> To date, I have been able to read only an on-line version of Ma's 2011 paper; this reproduction is not paginated but, instead, has numbered paragraphs.



Zhang Baotai's 'Dacheng Zongjiao', in effect, was a synthesis of ideas and practices he, or perhaps his teacher, Yang Pengyi 樣鵬翼, had derived from Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian sources. These teachings included a strong millennial component, with Zhang Baotai apparently proclaiming himself a manifestation of Maitreya, the Buddha of the coming *kalpa* or epoch (Seiwert 2003: 408). Likely, it also encompassed a strong anti-Qing political message (see below). According to Ma (2011: ¶12), Zhang Baotai formulated his teachings while residing in Tengyue County 騰越縣, present-day Tengchong 騰冲 in Baoshan 保山 Prefecture) on the Yunnan-Burma frontier. At that time, Ma (2011: ¶13) writes, Tengyue was 'a base for the Ming political refugees who had surrounded the Yongli emperor earlier in the Qing dynasty, then escaped to Burma'.

In 1681, Zhang Baotai established a small temple in the vicinity of Jizu Shan, where he became more proactive in disseminating his teachings. Since Jizu Shan, as Seiwert (2003: 406) remarks, 'was an important centre of Buddhist pilgrimage ...[with] a constant flow of pilgrims from distant places ... Zhang Baotai used the opportunity to propagate his teachings among them.'

It is not quite certain, although most likely, that Zhang preached an anti-Qing, pro-Ming restoration political message at his Jizu Shan temple. But it would be half a century after his arrival in Jizu Shan before the imperial authorities took action against him. In 1730, he was arrested and sentenced to death, but his execution, was kept on hold and he languished in prison until 1735, when he regained his freedom under an amnesty to celebrate the enthronement of the Qianlong emperor. Subsequently re-arrested, Zhang died a prisoner of the state in 1641 (Seiwert 2003: 407).

Liu Qi 劉奇, Zhang Baotai's Sichuanese disciple, who became his Master's successor in Sichuan—indeed proclaiming himself Zhang's reincarnation (Seiwert 2003: 407)—renamed the Dacheng Zongjiao teachings as Xilai Zhengzong 西來真宗 [True School/Sect (*zhengzong* 真宗) Coming from the West (*xilai* 西來)] (Seiwert *ibid.*). Under Liu's Mastership, an anti-Qing, pro-Ming political stance became one of the principal components of the sect's teachings: 'a mixture of political and religious aspirations including the expectation of Maitreya's descent and the restoration of the Ming dynasty' (Seiwert 2008: 407). But Liu Qi was 'cautious to operate clandestinely', as Seiwert (p. 408) notes. Possibly it is this that lies behind the labelling of Monk Yang Deyuan's Buddhism as 'Mizong'.

Zhang Baotai's Dacheng Zongjiao subsequently came under the umbrella of that diverse collection of heterodox, quasi-Buddhist, sometimes secret, Chinese folk religious cults known as Bai Lian Jiao 白蓮教 or White Lotus Religion (Ma 2011: ¶11; for the White Lotus Religion, see, among many others, Overmyer 1976: 89-108; Ter Haar 1992).

Returning specifically to Monk Yang Deyuan, according to Ma's (2011: ¶24) account, his birthplace was in Youyang 酉陽 County, a remote area of Sichuan bordering on Hunan Province.<sup>10</sup> This place was well known as a White Lotus

<sup>10</sup> This datum contradicts that of Liang *et al.* (1992: Ch. 9, p. 28 [each chapter is separately paginated]), who place Yang's birthplace in Qiuyang Prefecture of Shanxi Province.

stronghold (Ma *ibid.*). While Yang was still a child (which would have been in the early 1700s, if, as Ma [*ibid.*] records, he died in 1805), he moved to Jizu Shan, where he ordained as a monk and, as implied by Ma's study, where he absorbed the teachings of Zhang Baotai's Dacheng Zongjiao cult. At any rate, following the Qianlong emperor's 1746 crackdown on the sect (he proclaimed it an 'evil religion' and a threat to his dynasty's stability), Monk Yang is said to have fled from Jizu Shan, escaping across the border into Hsenwi in Burma (Ma *ibid.*). He appears to have passed many years as a wandering monk in Burma, before returning, in his old age, to Yunnan, where according to Ma (*ibid.*), he built the Nancha temple complex in 1790. (This date is about a century later than I had previously estimated, but it fits well with the life dates of several of Yang's historically recorded Nancha disciples [cf. Walker 2003: 311, 324]).

Yang Deyuan's likely affiliation with the 'Big Vehicle Religion' of Zhang Baotai and Liu Qi and with the White Lotus religious complex, with which it subsequently affiliated, greatly enhances our understanding of the religious teachings and theocratic political structure this monk brought to the Lahu Mountains. Liu Qi followed Zhang Baotai in embracing religious syncretism, espousing millenarianism and establishing a cult hierarchy. Moreover, whether, as is likely, he was following his religious mentor or not, Liu certainly favoured the elimination of the Qing dynasty and the reinstatement of the Ming. Yang Deyuan would pursue similar goals at Nancha.

Monk Yang successfully syncretized Buddhism's Śākyamuni (Chinese: Shijia Mouni 释迦牟尼), the historical Buddha, with the Lahu's own concept of an almighty creator-divinity, G'ui sha. As Li and Zuo (1983: 29) write, 'Buddhism incorporated belief in Esa 厄萨 [i.e. G'ui sha], claiming that Śākyamuni was, in fact, Esha, whose power was unmatched ... [;] only when people gave their total obedience to Esha and to Guanyin, a goddess subordinate to Esha, ... would disasters be eliminated, peace reign on earth, harvests be plentiful and the dead proceed to the Western Paradise' (see also Liang *et al.* 1992: 29, Anon. n.d.[b]: 94). And, of course, in the Mahāyāna tradition, Śākyamuni is a component, together with other Buddhas of past, present and future epochs, of transcendental 'Buddhahood'. It is this association of the creator-divinity G'ui sha with transcendental Buddhahood that accounts, I believe, for the apparent—but only apparent—monotheistic character of G'ui sha, as understood by non-Christian Lahu peoples.

Yang Deyuan fostered millenarianism among his Lahu followers, for whom Maitreya (Mile fo 弥勒佛), the Buddha of the next *kalpa* (Sanskrit, 'epoch'), would become an important object of veneration and symbol of their millennial dreams (cf. Song and Li 1981: 1-2). (Much later, in 1918, when another Lahu monk-leader led a revolt against the, by then, Republican Chinese authorities in Mangnuo 忙糯 (in present-day Shuangjiang 双江 County), some of the Lahu rebels 'carried with them paper portraits of Mile fo' (Anon. 1993a: 45).

Historically speaking, probably the most important of the varied facets of Yang Deyuan's religion that Lahu absorbed was the temple hierarchy he fostered. This began at Nancha—the mother temple—and stretched right down to the level of



Figure 6. Reconstructed main hall of Dongzhu temple (a principal daughter temple of Nancha) located in the mountains above Menglang Valley in Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, Yunnan Province.

Figure 7. Lahu Nyi village temple in North Thailand dedicated to the worship of the omnipotent creator-divinity, G'ui<sub>1</sub> sha



individual Lahu village communities. Nancha begat a number of daughter temples, set up by former disciples of Yang Deyuan, whom he dispatched (in the tradition of Zhang Baotai's Dacheng Jiao; cf. Seiwert 2003: 406) to preach the religion in other areas of the Lahu and Wa Mountains. And it was not long before these daughter temples likewise gave rise, at the township level, to their own subsidiary religious complexes, each one of which, in turn, had a dozen or so village temples under its jurisdiction (Liang *et al.* 1992: Ch. 9, 29). For the Lahu, all the supra-village temples were *da fofang* 大佛房 [great Buddha houses] or, in Lahu, *haw<sup>-</sup> yeh<sup>-</sup> lon<sup>-</sup>* 'big *haw<sup>-</sup> yeh* [lit. 'palace houses'] and each one constituted a regular Mahāyāna Buddhist monastic community comprising a *foye* 佛爷, the senior monk or abbot, and a number of *heshang* 和尚, ordained monks and novices.

These major temples were built in Chinese Buddhist style (Figs. 6, 8). Minimally, they had a public worship hall, with an altar on which were one to three images (if





Figure 8. Artist's impression of a principal Buddhist temple in the Lahu Mountains of south-west China circa late 18th century at festival time; three Lahu paying obeisance to the head monk, while others engage in gourd-pipe dancing (Lahu village and its temple in background)

on it, only bamboo or wooden containers to hold incense and purificatory water. There were no monks or novices associated with these village temples; instead, a caretaker, either the village headman himself, or a special appointee known in Lahu as the *fu\_sheh\_hpa* (literally, 'master [*sheh\_hpa*] of the temple [*fu* , from Chinese *fofang*]) was responsible both for keeping the temple in good repair and for conducting and/or supervising the obligatory rituals on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month, when his principal responsibility was to ensure his fellow villagers observed a more thoroughly Buddhist lifestyle (abstaining from meat and alcohol, from killing animals, etc.) than was deemed necessary on ordinary days. On these occasions (called *shi\_nyi* or merit days among Lahu in North Thailand), the *fu\_sheh\_hpa* 'would dress in a plain robe and beat a gong in order to remind the villagers of the restrictions [for that day]' (Li and Zuo 1983: 28. On these days, as also when they faced some particular misfortune or other, the villagers would go to their *fofang* 'to burn incense and to kowtow [prostrate themselves]' (Li and Zuo *ibid.*).

Over time, the hierarchical monastic structure, with its headquarters at Nancha,

one only, it would represent Śākyamuni [Anon. 1993b: 262]; if two, Śākyamuni and Guanyin 观音, the Goddess of Mercy (the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara, in the Indic world) (Li and Zuo 1983: 27); and if there were three, the third statue would be that of Mile fo 弥勒佛, or Maitreya, the Buddha of the coming epoch (Song and Li 1981:1). Beyond this hall were the residential quarters for the monks and novices and, in front of it—as a concession to Lahu tradition—there was an open space for gourd-pipe dancing, apparently a major ritual activity on the occasion of any temple festival attended by lay people.

Village-level *fofang* (Fig. 9) were very different from their supra-village counterparts (cf. Li and Zuo 1983: 28; Liang *et al.* 1992: ch. 9, p. 41). They were simple wood-and-bamboo structures with an altar, but with no Buddhist image set



Figure 9. Lahu village temple in Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, Yunnan Province



acquired a politico-military dimension. This became evident when the disciples of Monk Yang: Tongjin Heshang 铜金和尚 (1769-1813) followed by Tongdeng Heshang 铜登和尚 (?-1888), succeeded, one after the other, as abbot of Nancha. Tongjin was active in a massive revolt against the local Dai prince of Mengmeng 孟孟 (present-day seat of Shuangjiang 双江 County in Lincang 临沧 Prefecture), which occurred in 1799-1800 and was led by a Lahu warrior with the Chinese name of Li Wenming 李文明. Tongjin's principal role in this revolt was to provide the rebels with Buddhist legitimacy by establishing a *fofang* at their Baka 把卡 headquarters (in present-day Shuangjiang County). The outcome, however, did not favour the rebels. Because the Mengmeng prince enjoyed the recognition of the imperial authorities, he was able to call for assistance from the Qing army, whose superior force and weaponry repulsed the rebels, slaughtering Li Wenming and many others in the process. But Monk Tongjin survived, surrendered to the Qing authorities, de-robed and assumed the secular name Zhang Fuguo 张辅国 (literally *fuguo* translates as 'protector of the country'). The imperial authorities rewarded Zhang by conferring on him the office of hereditary *tumu* 土目 [local ruler under Qing overlordship]. But it would not be long before Zhang again rebelled. In 1813, the Qing authorities executed him; he was forty-four years old (Zhang and Liu 1993:8; Ma 2011: ¶25). Monk Tongdeng, who succeeded Tongjin (Zhang Fuguo) as abbot of Nancha, was another thorn in the flesh for the imperial administration, until his final insurrection was put down in 1887 and he himself executed the following year (Liang *et al.* 1992: Ch. 5, p. 44).

It is not possible in this paper to describe and explain the history of the Lahu's monastic organization and its military resistance to imperial Qing and early Republican officialdom, Dai princes and Han gentry (see Li and Yang [2003: 57-90] for the details); instead, I present summaries by two major Chinese authorities on southwestern Yunnan and on the Lahu people, *viz.* the historian Fang Guoyu 方国瑜 and the anthropologist Ruyi Yifu 芮逸夫. I begin with the late Professor Fang, who writes (1943: 36):

The Luohei [Lahu] Mountains originally had no written language. It was only because the *foye* were compelled to study the scriptures that they came to learn how to read and write the written language [i.e. Chinese]. Consequently the learning of the *foye* was greater than that of the common people. Moreover, because of the religious constraints [imposed upon them], the behavior of the *foye* was generally good and the people trusted them ... The prestige of the *foye* was thus high. The Luohei [had for long] lived together without chiefs and their organization was very loose; sometimes there was neither a Han official nor a Baiyi 摆夷 [Tai] *tusi* 土司 [indigenous leader with imperial mandate to rule] [to control them]. If some quarrel arose between villagers, there was nobody to whom they could take their dispute. Especially when quarrels arose between different village communities, no method of arbitration existed. But from now on there were *foye*, whom both antagonists would obey, to settle their quarrels ... After many years the *fofang* became administrative offices ... [and the] *foye* became the chiefs and gave orders to the people ... Among the *foye* some dominated over others and therefore a military-like organization came into being, with the *foye*, to realize their intentions,

leading their followers into war ... If anybody wanted to be a chief, he had first to become a monk and follow a Buddhist lifestyle. ... From that time on, all the rebellions that occurred in the Lahu Mountains were centred on the *fofang* and their leaders were *foye*.

In notably similar vein, the late Professor Rucy (1948:2) writes:

The monks were very upright people and so the Luohei believed and respected them. The Luohei lived in family units and had no chiefs. Their organization was very loose. In those days there were no Chinese officials [to administer them]. From time to time disputes arose and, because there was no place to go to seek arbitration, clashes would occur between different fortified villages. In such cases the *foye* were available and would attempt to resolve the dispute. ... [Thus] the *foye* became the chiefs and the *fofang* became their *yamen* 衙门 [administrative offices]. Therefore, to take advantage of these privileges, ambitious men among the Luohei became monks. From that time on, the *foye* no longer abided by the Buddhist precepts. The bells and drums were no longer effective [Chinese literary style for 'the Buddhist precepts were no longer followed'; instead, the *fofang* became places where soldiers were trained and politics discussed.

Although I believe it incorrect to assume Lahu lacked any form of supra-household and supra-village leadership prior to the arrival of Buddhist monks among them, it is indeed evident Buddhist clerics were frequently able to place themselves at the forefront of Lahu politico-military organization. Finally, it has to be told, Buddhism—or should we perhaps say Zhang Baotai's 'Great Vehicle Religion' as practised by Lahu (and some Wa)—paid dearly for fostering theocratic institutions that challenged the supremacy of Tai princes and the imperial authority. Whether they confronted Tai princes, who ruled in the name of the Emperor, or imperial officials directly, inevitably the Lahu incurred the wrath of the Chinese State. Inevitably also, the militant clerics and the institutions they represented bore the brunt of imperial ire. As Professor Fang writes (1943: 37), 'in the ten years of pacification during the Guangxu 光绪 reign [1875-1908], almost all the *fofang* and *foye* in the Luohei Mountains disappeared.'

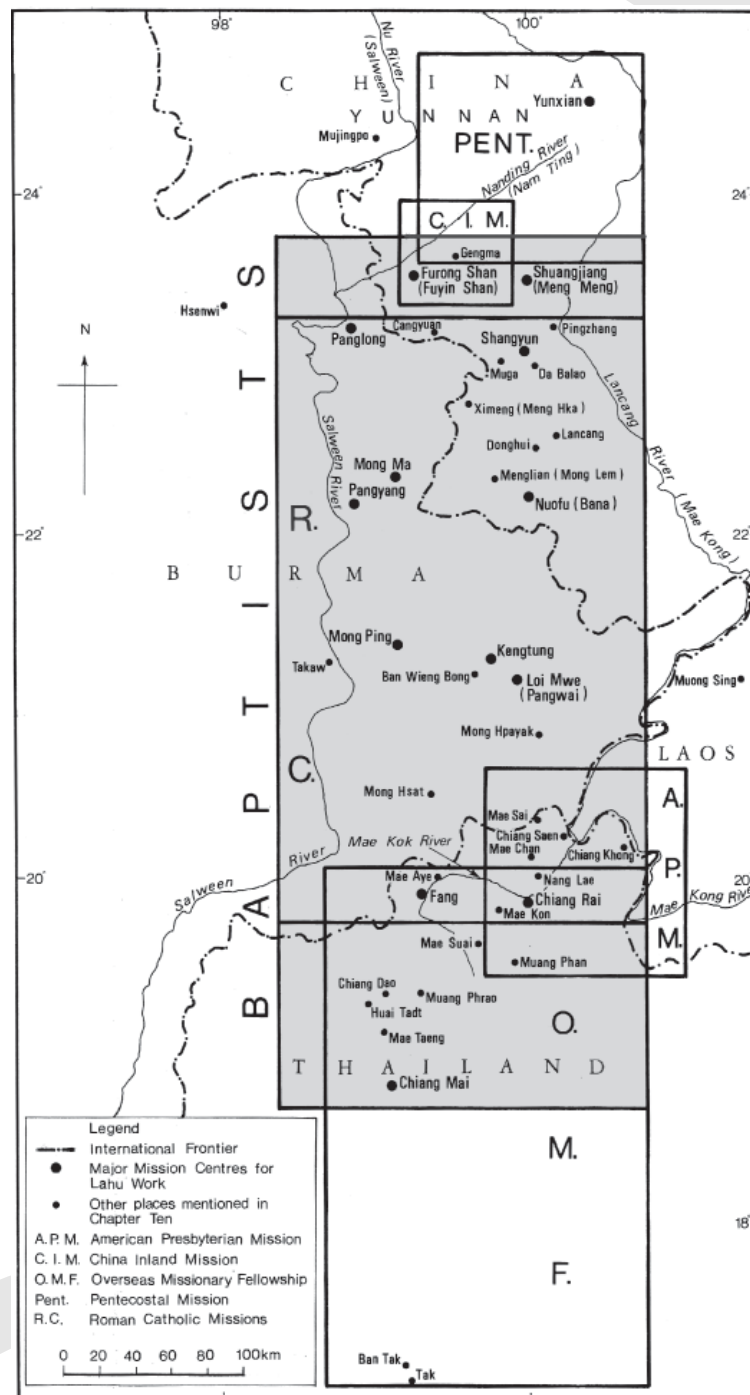
All this is certainly true for the supra-village level *da fofang* and their associated clergy. But village temples (or *haw<sup>-</sup> yeh<sub>u</sub>*) survived—and still survive—in many Lahu communities, both in the Lahu heartlands of southwestern Yunnan and among the diaspora in Burma and Thailand (Figs. 7, 9). But those who were in charge of these temples lacked formal Buddhist instruction or literacy and operated only as part-time specialists. Inevitably, therefore, the ideological and liturgical bases of much of earlier Lahu Buddhism has been forgotten, even to the extent—as among the Lahu Nyi I studied in North Thailand—that many present-day Lahu are no longer able to recall their Mahāyāna Buddhist heritage.

## Christianity among the Lahu

The third major strand in the Lahu people's religious heritage is Christianity. Although this religion has long been domiciled in many parts of East and Southeast Asia, it is still regarded, especially in those countries where Lahu peoples live, as an essentially Western import. This, of course, is because Christian missionaries from Europe and the United States were the first to introduce it to many parts of this region. Subsequently, it is true, much of the proselytism has been carried on by indigenous believers themselves—among the Lahu, first by Karen (cf. Walker 2008) and later by Lahu themselves—working both alongside and independently of Western missionaries of American, British, Australian, French, Italian, Brazilian and other nationalities. In recent decades, Lahu Christians, originally from Burma but domiciled in Thailand, have converted large numbers of Lahu Nyi in North Thailand, while those still living in Burma have sought to reinvigorate existing Lahu Christian communities and proselytize among non-Christian Lahu in Yunnan.

Modern Chinese works that touch on the history of the Lahu peoples' encounter with the Christian religion frequently tell how Lahu in Yunnan, when confronted with the proselytizing efforts of the first American Baptist missionaries, told them: 'The Lahu cannot wear two hats, we have believed in Buddhism for generations and our belief cannot be changed' (Chen 1963: 22 [1968: 42]). What these Lahu apologists for the older religion (if indeed they ever made such a remark) probably did not know was that a few of their people had donned that 'other hat' some twenty years earlier, not in China but in North Thailand, and not at the behest of American Baptists, but of American Presbyterians (Walker 2003: 554-570; 2010a-e). Subsequently, from the very start of the 20th century American Baptists and their converts dominated the Lahu mission field (Map 2), both in eastern Burma (Walker 2003: 570-592, 647-683; 2010f-g; 2011a-f, h-j, l-n, p-q) and in southwestern Yunnan (Walker 2003: 592-617, 2011g, k-m, o, r-t). In the former Shan state of Kengtung, the Baptists for a time had to compete with American Presbyterians based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, but who had expanded their evangelistic work into Kengtung (Walker 2003: 581-582). During the second decade of the 20th century, Italian Catholic missionaries from the diocese of Toungoo, members of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME) based in Milan, joined the Baptists in Kengtung (Walker 2003: 588-589; 2011u-v). In Yunnan, the Protestant multi-denominational China Inland Mission (some of whose missionaries were themselves Baptists!) (Walker 2003: 613-617), as well as Chinese Pentecostals based in Kunming (Walker 2003: 613), contested American Baptist hegemony. Then, from the mid-1930s, Roman Catholic priests and lay brothers also began work in the Lancang (SW Yunnan) field, hitherto evangelized exclusively by American Baptists. The Roman Catholic missionaries were mostly Frenchmen from the Apostolic Prefecture of Dali; they were members of the Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose mother house was in Bétharram on the Franco-Spanish border, hence several of them were of Basque ethnicity (Walker 2003: 617-623; 2011x-z).

Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, all foreign missionaries were expelled from Chinese territory. The longer-established Lahu Baptist



Map 3. The territorial extent of various Christian missionary organizations proselytizing among Lahu.

organization managed to survive—and still survives (cf. Yamamori and Chan 2000; Chan 2001; Walker 2003: 699-717, 2011r-t; Nishimoto 2014), but the Roman Catholic community seems to have withered away. As for foreign missionaries working among Lahu in Yunnan, some came to Thailand, where the very first Lahu converts were gained, but whose small community of Lahu Presbyterians did not survive. Among the most



active of the new wave of Christian missionaries among Lahu (and other hill peoples) in Thailand in the early 1950s were ex-China Inland Mission workers: British, Canadian and American, who now renamed themselves as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) (cf. Walker 2003: 624-626). They were joined and, ultimately, superseded by Baptists from Burma (cf. Walker 2003: 721-730). Today, Protestant Christian Lahu, not all Baptists, constitute about a third of all Lahu living in the kingdom.

Two Bétharram fathers from the Yunnan field also came to work in North Thailand (cf. Walker 2003: 626-627, 2011z), where the Bishop of Dali had been designated acting Bishop of Chiang Mai. But following initial contacts with Lahu in the Fang area, these priests did not pursue their Lahu work, involving themselves instead with the lowland Tai (Khon Mueang) majority. Since the 1970s, however, a PIME priest, no longer able to work in Burma, has evangelized with considerable success among Lahu in the Fang area. There are probably about 5,000 Lahu Catholics in Thailand today (cf. Walker 2003: 730-732; 2011w).

Meanwhile, in Burma, following the military coup of 1962, foreign missionaries, who had been in the country since before the country's Independence in 1948, were permitted to remain, but only if they took Burmese citizenship; all others were expelled. The result was that both Baptist and Catholic work among Lahu became entirely indigenous. And it has certainly flourished. Outside of China, Burma, almost certainly, has the largest number of Lahu Christians (*circa* 178,000 or 80% of all 'Lahu'—probably Lahu Na—and *circa* 1,200 or 10% of all Lahu Shi). Most of these Lahu Christians are Baptists, but we should not forget that a Lahu priest is now the Auxiliary Bishop of Kengtung, appointed to that see by Pope John-Paul II in 2001 (Anon. 2007; n.d. [h]).

It is not my intention to detail the history of Christianity among Lahu in Burma, China or Thailand. I have covered the story with, I hope, reasonable thoroughness in Part Three (pp. 551-733) of my 2003 book, *Merit and the Millennium: Routine and Crisis in the Ritual Lives of the Lahu People*; also in thirty-seven illustrated one-page spreads for Brunei's *Borneo Bulletin* newspaper (Walker 2010b-g; 2011 a-zf) and, for the first Lahu Christians in North Thailand only, in Walker 2010a). Here, I shall concentrate on examples of how Lahu Christians have synthesized their animo-theistic and Mahāyāna Buddhist heritage with their more recently-acquired Protestantism or Roman Catholicism.

A characteristic of pre-Christian Lahu religion facilitating the rapid spread of Christianity—Protestant and Roman Catholic—among many Lahu communities in Burma, Yunnan and, relatively recently, in Thailand too, is its propensity to generate prophets, who raise millenarian expectations among their followers. For example, the pioneer American Baptist, William Marcus Young (1861-1936), who began preaching in the Kengtung bazaar in 1901, just two years later wrote back to his mission's headquarters in the United States (W.M. Young 1903a: 3): 'There is some excitement over some dreams among ... [the Lahu] ... Parties in three separate villages had dreams that Christ was coming this month, that unless they quit their drinking, gambling and licentiousness and accepted Christ quickly, they would be cast into the fire when he came.' A month later, in another letter to mission headquarters, Young (1903b: 4-5) expanded on these 'dreams', now replacing 'Christ' with 'God'. Thus:



Figure 10. Lahu baptism by total immersion in the river, Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, Yunnan Province (courtesy: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe).

Figure 11. The reconstructed (following destruction during the Cultural Revolution) principal church of the American Baptist Mission at Nuofu, Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, Yunnan Province.

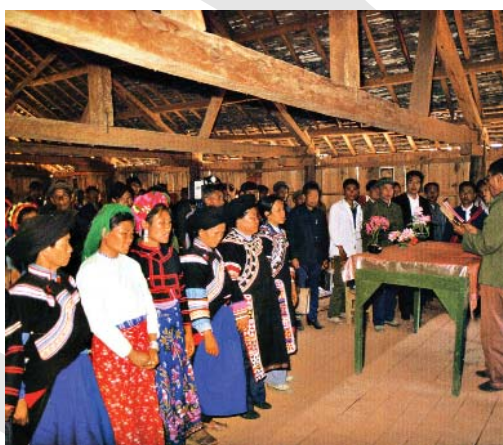


Figure 12. A Sunday service in a Lahu Baptist village in Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, Yunnan Province (courtesy: Yunnan Meishu Chubanshe).

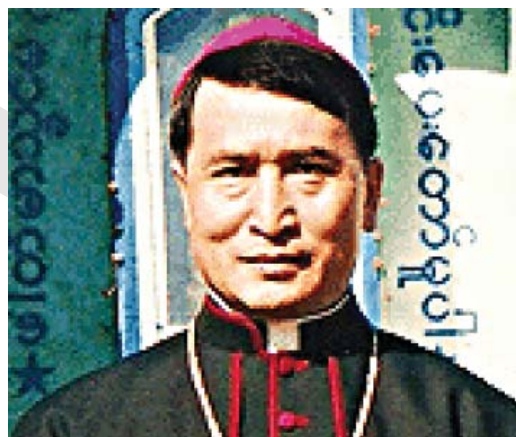


Figure 13. The Most Reverend Peter Louis Ca Kü (Ca, Hkui), the first Lahu prelate of the Roman Catholic Church, appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Kengtung, Burma, in 1997 by Pope John-Paul II.



I ... find that some ten years ago [*circa* 1893] they had some visions or dreams in many Muhso [Lahu] villages scattered widely ... that the true God was coming soon [and] that they would be cast into Hell when he came if they did not give up drinking, gambling, the use of opium and all evil habits, and follow the true God at once. *Many who have heard the preaching of the Gospel* [by the Baptist missionaries] *regard it as the fulfillment of their dreams* [emphasis added].

Towards the end of 1904, we find Young (1904: 1-3) again writing on Lahu millennial expectations. Declaring his mission's 'work among the Muhsos is now opening up at a pace that far exceeds our expectation', and he continues:

The Muhsos say the true God dwelt among men, that he has gone away, that he will come back again. They give his name as Ya su [Young took this to mean Jesus, but if it is his rendition of *ya<sup>h</sup> suh<sup>h</sup>*, it would mean 'new man'] ... [and] say the foreigner is to bring them the knowledge of the true God ... they say ... [t]hey [the Lahu] send teachers through the country to warn people not to drink liquor or to follow any of the grosser sins.

These are but very brief extracts from Young's correspondence (see Walker 2003: 573-588 for a fuller treatment), but they clearly adumbrate the contemporary millennial hopes of a great many Lahu, expectations that came to focus on William Young himself, as the 'foreign messiah' to the Lahu, successor to the Buddhist holy men who had led the Lahu's struggle against Tai and Han overlords in Yunnan, the one who would bring them into a new age, free from outside political oppression (Walker 2003: 579-581).

Thirty or so years later, in Yunnan rather than Kengtung, Roman Catholicism benefited from similar Lahu messianic expectations. In 1935, the young, rather frail-looking Basque priest, Jean-Pierre Oxibar (1898-1964) of the order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (the Bétherram fathers) introduced the teachings and liturgical practices of *Ecclesia Romana* to Lahu in Lancang County. His evangelistic efforts, as another Bétherram father would later write (Mieyaa 1973:9) 'began like a fairy tale' and (in more theological vein) 'there was a breath of that great wind of the Pentecost, which had thrown the pagans at the feet of the Apostles'. And again Mieyaa (1973:17) writes, 'Begun as if by a magic wand, the evangelization progressed like a miracle', with 'Father Oxibar ... [having] no need to venture out to meet the Lahu villagers. Spontaneously, they came flocking to him.' Fr. Oxibar succeeded in converting some ten thousand Lahu 'en masse', a feat Mieyaa (1973: 7) describes as 'both extraordinary and rare in the history of the Church in the 20th century' (my translations from the French). Father Oxibar's description (as quoted in Mieyaa 1973:18) of his reception when visiting Lahu villages, *viz.* having beeswax candles lit for him, his hands and feet washed in water said to impart blessings to those who subsequently used it, and, above all, being addressed as 'Father G'ui<sub>h</sub> sha', make quite clear that his Lahu hosts accepted the Basque priest as a prophet and participant in G'ui<sub>h</sub> sha's divinity. For Fr. Oxibar and his fellow priests this may have been a 'New Pentecost', but for the Lahu it was surely the arrival of a new prophet, who would lead them from Chinese oppression. Moreover, when other

priests joined Oxibar in Lancang to evangelize among Lahu, the latter addressed them as *a pa lon* 'big father'; it was only Oxibar whom they addressed as *a pa G'ui*. As Fr. Jean Saint-Guily (1964:3), one of his colleagues in Lancang, wrote in his obituary for Oxibar, *a pa G'ui* is the title 'the pagan Lahu use when they speak of a prophet present in their region'. At great feasts, like Christmas and the lunar New Year festival, Saint-Guily writes (*ibid.*), Oxibar received on his chapel porch delegation after delegation of Lahu Christians from different villages, who brought him gifts. He would preside over the feasting and bless the seeds around which the Lahu would dance in circles for a long period of time. Again, there can be little doubt that these Lahu were treating their new *a pa G'ui* in the manner they were accustomed to honour a prophet, as also their former Buddhist abbots (see Walker 2003: 505-547; 2011y).

The importance of the Lahu prophetic and millenarian traditions as facilitators of conversion to Christianity is particularly evident from William Young's successes in early 20th century Kengtung, Burma—the so-called 'Kengtung Movement'—and from the religious fervour Fr. Oxibar generated in Lancang, Yunnan in the mid-1930s. There are other examples from different places and at different periods, but space does not permit me to discuss them here. I must, nonetheless, re-emphasize the intimate relationship that has existed, more or less from the start of the Christian missionary enterprise among Lahu, between Christianity and Lahu messianic ideas, themselves much coloured by long association with millennial Buddhism. William Marcus Young and Jean-Pierre Oxibar may have been poles apart in terms of the Christian dogmas they propagated, but their success as missionaries obviously was closely related to the fact that both of them were accepted by sizable components of the Lahu population as *a pa G'ui*, 'divine fathers', prophets who participated in the divinity of *G'ui sha* and whose arrival among the Lahu stimulated the messianic hopes of an oppressed mountain people to become the equals of their lowland-based rulers. But political oppression cannot stand alone in explaining the very considerable attraction that the Christian religion seems to have had—and apparently still has—for the Lahu peoples, since they are certainly not alone among mountain peoples who, historically, have experienced oppression by lowland rulers.

I suspect the Lahu attraction to Christianity is, in part at least, associated with the strongly developed ideas that many Lahu-speaking peoples exhibit for the practical as well as theoretical primacy of *G'ui sha* as creator-divinity. Closely-related Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples, like Lisu and Akha, and, for that matter, some branches of the Lahu-speaking peoples themselves, certainly do not lack the concept of a creator-divinity. But they do not, as do many non-Christian Lahu communities, ascribe to this entity a pre-eminent rôle in determining people's day-to-day lives. Why this unusual reverence for *G'ui sha*? Not, I believe, because of some atavistic preference for Semitic-style monotheism, but rather due to the association of *G'ui sha* with the transcendental Buddhahood of the Mahāyāna tradition that is traceable to the teachings of Monk Yang Deyuan among the Lahu in the latter part of the 18th century. It must certainly be noted that most Christian missionaries among Lahu have found no need to use any other name than *G'ui sha* for the Semitic God of Christianity; it must also be stressed that Christian Lahu have by now fully synthesized the Christian conception of a monotheistic deity with their long-established notion of *G'ui sha*, their preeminent creator-divinity.



Christian proselytism, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, shows no sign that it has run its course among the Lahu people. Newly converted communities may be found in Thailand, Laos and Yunnan. Nonetheless, the majority of today's Christian Lahu are second, third, fourth or even fifth-generation members of this religious persuasion. Such people do not regard Christianity as an alien tradition foisted upon them by outsiders. Rather, it is an integral part of the culture into which they were born. Japanese anthropologist Nishimoto Yoichi, who has lived with and studied Christian Lahu in North Thailand, writes that 'Christianity has been well integrated in the culture of Christian Lahu' and he tells us: 'For Christian Lahu, there is hardly an[y] inconsistency between "Lahu tradition" and "the new religion of foreign origin" ... [such as] outside observers often expect ... [among] Christian highlanders' (Nishimoto 2000: 70). In those Lahu Christian village communities of Yunnan, Burma, Laos and Thailand, wherein a Protestant pastor or a Roman Catholic priest (the last apparently no longer operative in Yunnan) has replaced a traditional priest, spirit specialist or Buddhist monk, and where a high percentage of the people 'go to church on Sundays to pray, sing hymns and listen to Bible readings and a sermon', this is not because a foreign missionary insists, but because this is what is conceived as the *chaw maw aw, li* 'the way of the elders' (cf. Nishimoto 200:73).

The 'Christianity of the Lahu people' Nishimoto (2000: 70-71) tells us, 'is colored with ethnicity and seems to work less to promote universal brotherhood as Christians than to promote a group consciousness as Lahu-cum-Christian.' Arguably, of course, such union of Christian religion and ethnicity occurs in many—perhaps most—minority Christian communities the world over. But back to Nishimoto, who writes:

Many sermons of Lahu pastors address the problems and sufferings of the Lahu people ... Christian Lahu often compare themselves to the people of Israel in [the] Old Testament and talk about their loss of country, wandering, diaspora, and subjugation to other peoples. Christian Lahu are interested in those aspects of this world religion which would explain and give possible solutions to their plight as an oppressed ethnic minority.

But millenarianism (such as we saw in William Young's 'Kengtung Movement' and Father Oxibar's 'New Pentecost'), Nishimoto (2000: 71) remarks, is no longer 'radical or apparent' among the Baptist Lahu in North Thailand. This said, Nishimoto goes on to write (*ibid.*): 'millenarian aspiration has survived as an important undercurrent in ... Lahu Christianity. Salvation both in the other and in this world is a concern of Christian Lahu ... [with] Lahu pastors preach[ing] about how to behave as good Christians in order to enter heaven. Christian Lahu associate the popular Christian idea of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ with the liberation of the Lahu people from the[ir] present plight'.

Turning to another crucial component of traditionalist religion, belief in the powers of malicious spirits, Christian Lahu feel no need to propitiate or exorcise the *ne* or spirits in the manner of the traditionalists, as described in the first section of this paper. This does not mean, however, they have altogether rejected belief in spirits. For example, Nishimoto (2000: 71-72) records his Christian Lahu informants in North Thailand

telling him: ‘there are by far more evil spirits in Burma than in Thailand.’ But these same Christian Lahu do not perform rituals of propitiation and exorcism in the manner of the traditionalists, because they believe G’ui sha to be ‘more powerful than the spirits’. Indeed, as Nishimoto (*ibid.*) learned, ‘[o]ne of the important reasons to be Christian’ was the perception of this ‘religion’s ability to compete with the malicious spirits.’ These Lahu do not see acceptance of Christianity as a denial of the reality of spirits, which they now equate with the demons of Christian belief, saying that ‘Lucifer, the fallen angel in the Bible, is ... the ‘boss’ of these evil spirits’ (Nishimoto 2000: 74).

In sum, although the religious tradition Western missionaries brought to many Lahu in their mountain homes was undoubtedly for them an extremely alien one, for reasons I have tried to adumbrate above, significant numbers embraced its teachings and liturgical practices. But more than this, they were able to incorporate the new ideology and practices into their world view and into their day-to-day lives so that these became for them and, especially, for their descendants, as much ‘the way of the elders’ and integral to their ‘Lahu-ness’ as are the super-mundane ideas and practices of those who have remained faithful to more traditional ways. This is the combined achievement of missionaries—foreign and indigenous—and of Lahu mountain farmers themselves.

### Brief concluding remarks

In this paper, I have endeavoured to highlight the principal characteristics of each of the three strands of the Lahu’s religious heritage, as understood by Lahu themselves. For Buddhism and Christianity, although leaving a great deal unsaid, I have attempted also to provide the bare essentials of the history of these movements among Lahu-speaking peoples.

My principal purpose has been to examine the manner in which Lahu have been able to unite old ways and practices with new ideas coming to them by way of Buddhist monks and through the teachings of Protestant pastors and Roman Catholic priests.

I have pointed to the Lahu people’s millennial dreams, fired by political domination and oppression by lowland authorities, as responsible for their enthusiasm for following sectarian Buddhist monks, Protestant pastors and Roman Catholic priests, whom they have seen as saviours come to lead them to a new world of emancipation and egalitarianism. I have also emphasized the singular importance of the Lahu’s concept of an almighty creator-divinity, G’ui sha—a concept that was amenable to re-interpretation by Buddhist teachers in terms of transcendental Buddhahood and by Christian evangelists as the monotheistic deity of the Semitic tradition.

Finally, I venture to say, just as members of the Chinese Communist Party like to tell us they practise ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ so too did Lahu practise ‘Buddhism with Lahu characteristics’, just as many today subscribe to a ‘Christianity with Lahu characteristics’.

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# The *Sittan* of Monè (Mäng Nai): Shan Principality and Nyaungyan Burma, 1633-1763

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## Abstract

Conventional historiography of Burma (Myanmar) has it that Bayinnaung's laissez-faire policy towards the Shan States based on a tributary relationship continued to be maintained by succeeding Nyaungyan kings, and attempts at political integration of the Shan areas into the Burmese empire began in the early years of the subsequent Konbaung dynasty. However, an official Burmese document called *sittan*, submitted to the Konbaung court by the Shan principality of Monè (Mäng Nai) in 1763, reveals that it was actually early Nyaungyan monarchs who, while instituting broad and definitive changes in the provincial organization of the Burmese lowlands in the first half of the 17th century, introduced some administrative innovations to the Shan uplands, thereby transforming the Prince of Monè, locally known as the "Lord of Heaven," into a mere subject of the Avan monarch.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

"Considering the size of Burma and its pivotal importance within the interstate system of mainland Southeast Asia," argued Professor Victor Lieberman more than thirty years ago (1984: 8), "precolonial Burmese history as a whole suffered from scholarly neglect." He further emphasized that the period of Nyaungyan Burma "has been particularly ignored," and thus only a few Western-language articles on the era have appeared.<sup>2</sup> While this academic tendency, hopefully, may have changed favorably

<sup>1</sup> I agree with Christian Daniels (2012: 148n) on "calling ethnic groups by their own names," and "shun[ning] this exonym [Shan] in favor of their autonym, Tay." Nevertheless, I use "Shan" and "Monè," instead of "Tay" and "Mäng Nai," throughout this article, as it is based on the document written in the Burmese, not Tay, language. I therefore do not reconstruct original Tay words—official titles and ranks, personal names, and toponyms—from the Burmese equivalents in the *sittan*. For the Romanization of words of Tay origin, I basically (but not strictly) follow the suggestions of Shintani (2000).

<sup>2</sup> Not particularly, though. The post-Pagan period has been equally, if not more, neglected by scholars, and thus "represents a significant gap in Myanmar's history, yet to see a single book-

since then, one thing still remains the same: scholarly neglect of the administrative organization in the Shan States under Nyaungyan Burma.<sup>3</sup> Than Tun, one of the most revered historians, native or foreign, of Burma, wrote one of the “few Western-language articles” on the era, titled “Administration under King Thalun 1629-48” (1987). As his focus is on describing various aspects of Burmese society per se under the rule of Thalun, the essay has no reference to native administration in the Shan Highlands. Meanwhile, Lieberman, in Chapter Two of his broad and in-depth study, undoubtedly the best English work on the period, spent only four out of seventy-five pages on the subject, although acknowledging that the Shan Hills and other highland regions constituted more than a half of the Nyaungyan realm (1984: 130-4).<sup>4</sup> Political control over the vast area of the Shan world as a military recruitment ground and the source of forest luxuries must have been a wheel of pivotal importance in the “Burmese administrative cycles.”

The scholarly neglect is, however, due more to the scarcity of historical documents (in addition to the physical and psychological inaccessibility to the region under the military regime) than to lack of academic interest. Burmese and Shan (and other Tai) records, in the form of inscriptions, chronicles, or governmental documents, and European observations on Nyaungyan policy toward the Shan States are fairly limited in quantity as well as in quality,<sup>5</sup> which has long deterred scholars from exploring the issue. Meanwhile, as few surviving records suggest that any remarkable reform of the political organization in the Shan Highlands was introduced by Nyaungyan leaders, it has been conventionally concluded that it was the succeeding Konbaung monarchs who embarked upon a major program of administrative integration of the Shan States into the Burmese empire.

However, at the same time, the administratively innovative character of the early Nyaungyan kings and the politically conservative nature of the first Konbaung dynasts have been also well known.<sup>6</sup> The first half-century of the Nyaungyan period (neatly corresponding to the first half of the 17th century) was the turning point in the institutional history of monarchical Burma.<sup>7</sup> It was a “highly important stage in Burmese political development,” during which the “final shape of the Burmese state and

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length monograph in English” (Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin 2012: 107).

<sup>3</sup> A recent work on Burmese history by the Aung-Thwins (2012) reserves a chapter for the Nyaungyan era. However, because of its nature, their study concentrates on describing a general, court-oriented history, rather than providing a detailed analysis of a particular administrative issue on the imperial periphery.

<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Lieberman does not distinguish Shan from Tai Yuan (called *Yun* in Burmese) of Lan Na, collectively labeling them “Tai.” Thus, strictly speaking, only three pages are spent on the Nyaungyan administrative policy toward the Shan States. Throughout monarchical Burma, the two were separately treated, in terms of administration, by each dynasty.

<sup>5</sup> For example, to the best of my knowledge, virtually no Shan chronicles written before the 19th century survive to this day. Neither do lithic records in the Shan language.

<sup>6</sup> Lieberman describes (1984: 110) Alaunghpaya’s administration as “highly conservative,” and concludes (264), “He left the structure of Restored Toungoo [i.e. Nyaungyan] administration basically intact.” This conservativeness is also referred to by Taylor (2009: 20).

<sup>7</sup> Taylor remarks (19), “From the early seventeenth century onward the state in Burma changed its nature and structural relationships, as well as its bases of stability and power.”



administration was established” (BSTN: 19).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, a “long-term trend toward centralization” that would continue under the next dynasty truly began (Lieberman 1984: 14; Taylor 2009: 21).<sup>9</sup> This inevitably makes one wonder if the “relationship between the center and the vassal principalities appears to have remained unchanged” in the Nyaungyan era;<sup>10</sup> and the succeeding Konbaung monarchs, who would “follow Taung-ngu [i.e. Nyaungyan] political organization with only minor modifications until the mid-nineteenth century” (BSTN: 19), originally and successfully “translated their interest into systematic administrative reform” by their own initiatives. Apparently, herein lies a contradiction.

This article, largely drawing on the heretofore unstudied material, *sittans* written by courtiers of Monè (Mäng Nai), a Shan principality to the southeast of the Burmese capital, will attempt a preliminary and general observation on the administrative policy of Ava toward the Shan States, thereby unraveling the contradictory accounts prevalent in the conventional historiography of “early modern” Nyaungyan Burma.

### The document: Burmese *sittans*

Literally meaning “a record of an inquiry,” and essentially “a statement by the official in charge of a particular jurisdiction,” *sittans* are valuable documents for the study of Burmese history, as they are a mine of information on the lineage of headmen, boundaries, customary taxes and services, administrative and social organizations of the jurisdiction, usually not featured in dynastic records and chronicles mostly centered on kingly events (BSTN: 5; cf. ROB I: 80). While *sittans* are a “longstanding feature of Burmese administration” (BSTN: 51), the oldest dating back to the late 14th century, and a number of the documents were probably produced by successive dynasties,<sup>11</sup> those *sittans* from the reign of Thalun, the third monarch of the Nyaungyan dynasty, became exemplary with their extensiveness and thoroughness. Consequently, Thalun’s work would be used as a model by later Burmese monarchs, especially Hsinbyushin and Bodawhpaya of the succeeding Konbaung dynasty.<sup>12</sup> Bodawhpaya’s inquest of 1802 was the last major program by a Burmese king, while his successors including Thibaw, the last king of Burma deposed by the British in 1885, continued to conduct surveys on a far smaller scale (55).

<sup>8</sup> Abbreviations of frequently cited materials are shown at the end of the article.

<sup>9</sup> Lieberman also argues (1984: 64), “The formal structures and associated ideologies of Thalun’s reign continued throughout the Toungoo [i.e. Nyaungyan] period and into the early Konbaung era.”

<sup>10</sup> Taylor states (2009: 23), “When these tributaries [Shan and other hill peoples] posed no serious threat to the central state, [Nyaungyan] kings allowed them to conduct their affairs undisturbed.” Meanwhile, Lieberman notes, “Royal interest [of Nyaungyan monarchs] was never translated into systematic administrative reform, and the structure of tributary relations remained basically unaltered from Bayinnaung’s day” (1984: 131), thus concluding, “This region [the Shan Highlands and other hilly areas] saw very few administrative innovations [during the Nyaungyan period]” (65).

<sup>11</sup> The ZOK contains many *sittans* with various dates from the Nyaungyan era, while the ROB (II: 60) specifically refers to kingdom-wide surveys of 1637, 1649, and 1692.

<sup>12</sup> Most of their *sittans* are included in the BSTN.

The *sittan* of Monè (*List* 50, #2), though unsatisfactory without detailed accounts on the local history and society, and apparently fragmentary with the last pages missing, is nevertheless quantitatively and qualitatively rare, thus a very valuable and interesting source material for historical research. Compared to *sittans* from lowland Burmese districts, those from the Shan uplands during the Konbaung period are disproportionately scarce, only a few of them available in the BSTN.<sup>13</sup> The BSTN supposes that the Shan were exempted from submitting the records by annually sending tribute to the Avan king and occasionally providing auxiliaries for the Burmese army, which accounts for the scarcity of Shan *sittans*.<sup>14</sup>

However, we know at least two kingdom-wide inquests including the Shan Highlands were conducted by Thalun in the 1630s and Minyè-kyawdin in the 1690s (ROB I: 79-80; II: 61-3).<sup>15</sup> The former attempt, as an exemplar, was followed in the succeeding Konbaung period. Furthermore, several population summaries and lists of military servicemen in the Shan States were intermittently collected by Konbaung monarchs, in 1790, 1816, 1820, 1827, 1836, and 1855 (*List* 11, #16), which must have been, partially or entirely, based on *sittans* or other related documents prepared by the Shan leaders.<sup>16</sup> It seems more likely that Konbaung *sittans* of the Shan States were lost, rather than never submitted, and, except for those few contained in the BSTN, the *sittan* of Monè is the only surviving one among them.

The royal inquest that produced the *sittan* of Monè was conducted in 1763, during the last months of the three and a half-year reign of Naungdawgyi, the second king of the Konbaung dynasty. His short reign has been customarily thought administratively and militarily far less productive than those of his father and predecessor, Alaung-hpaya, the founder of the dynasty, and of his successor, Hsinbyushin, the conqueror of Ayutthaya,<sup>17</sup> as the young king was largely occupied with internal battles with other crown contenders (Koenig 1990: 192-9; Yi Yi 1979: 114). No records, royal edicts, dynastic chronicles, or accounts of European observers, indicate that the impaired monarch ever followed the precedent of Thalun to set on an extensive inquest of his realm. However, the *sittan* of Monè, surviving from the reign of Naungdawgyi, at least attests he actually attempted to conduct land surveys, though on an unknown scale, the result of which has yet to be

<sup>13</sup> Only three *sittans*, all from the “western Shan” domains of Wuntho and Tein-ngyin, can be found in the BSTN (363-70; 379-80).

<sup>14</sup> Shan areas were probably excluded from the royal inquests by Hsinbyushin and Bodawhpaya, as the edict of 1785 (ROB IV: 110), concerning the correction of mistakes in the *sittans* of 1764, 1765, and 1783, has no reference to Shan rulers as the recipient of the royal order that included officers and leaders of many crown service groups and organizations, as well as headmen of various towns and villages.

<sup>15</sup> Monè was included in both inquests. ROB (II: 60) also refers to another inquiry made by King Pindale in 1649. ZOK contains several *sittans*, mainly collected during the first three Nyaungyan reigns, from the Shan realm, although the historical accuracy of the ZOK “was impaired by the circumstances of its compilation” (Lieberman 1984: 294).

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Bodawhpaya ordered Momeik (Mäng Mit) to submit a list of the population in 1810 (ROB VI: 206).

<sup>17</sup> Therefore the Aung-Thwins in their general history of Burma spend only a half line to describe Naungdawgyi, “Alaunghpaya’s son and crown prince who died peacefully” (2012: 160).

found unlike those made by his younger brothers, Hsinbyushin and Bodawhpaya.

If the Monè *sittan* was collected exclusively and independently, it might have had something to do with the Burmese expedition against the then autonomous polity of Lan Na, which had successfully ended nine days before the Monè officials made the statement (KBZ I: 337, 343).<sup>18</sup> As the end of Lan Na pacification came in sight, the Konbaung monarch found it imperative to secure administrative control over the Shan dependency, a major forward base for military operation against the trans-Salween Tai world and, with a logical southward sequence, Ayutthaya. In the reverse direction, Monè was the first major stockade from Lan Na. If the trans-Salween region had fallen to Ayutthaya, then, Monè could have become a frontier town, through which the Siamese troops advancing on the Burmese heartland would surely march.

Meanwhile there is also some possibility that the *sittan* of Monè was produced by a larger inquiring project, to which the *sittan* of Wuntho contained in the BSTN may also belong.<sup>19</sup> The statement in the *sittan* of Wuntho (BSTN: 363) was made on 11 January 1764, a little more than a month after the ascension of Hsinbyushin to the throne. The new king might have taken over, with the throne, the administrative endeavor that had been suspended by the death of his brother. Alternately, as there seems to have been no pressing need for the new crown to rush into collecting *sittans* from the countryside, the royal agents who made the inquiries in Wuntho might have been dispatched from the capital while Naungdawgyi was still on the throne, and the *sittan* of Wuntho was the result of a larger census operation, to which the *sittan* of Monè also belonged.

Although the short-lived king was busy suppressing rebellions, first by his younger brother, the future King Hsinbyushin, then by the able general of Alaung-hpaya, and lastly by his uncle, the latter half of his three and a half-year reign was peaceful and thus uneventful.<sup>20</sup> Having established himself at the capital with much leisure time and human as well as material resources at his disposal, and well aware of his lack of the military prowess possessed by his illustrious father and support from his ministers and generals (Koenig 1990: 194-8),<sup>21</sup> Naungdawgyi had to prove himself an able leader. He thus launched a military expedition against Lan Na, probably as part of preparations for a far larger campaign to Ayutthaya, which even his charismatic father had not managed to achieve.<sup>22</sup> It would be a logical choice for Naungdawgyi, so young and willing, to embark upon an administrative mission modeled on that of another celebrated Burmese king, Thalun. However, his untimely, sudden death denied him the credit he would have

<sup>18</sup> As Monè had already accepted Burmese vassalage in 1755, the royal inquiry of 1763 was not aimed at procuring necessary statistics of a newly acquired territory.

<sup>19</sup> Wuntho (Wen-sä in Shan; lit. City of Tiger), a Shan domain of *sawbwa*-ship at that time, lay within easy reach from Shwebo, the homeland of the Konbaung Dynasty.

<sup>20</sup> KBZ spends less than two pages (I: 337-9) on the period, merely referring to Naungdawgyi's lavish donations to Buddhist institutions and dispatch of the military campaign across the Salween.

<sup>21</sup> He managed though to defeat the challenges of all the crown contenders.

<sup>22</sup> It is not clear why Alaunghpaya so hastily engaged in his campaign to Ayutthaya, rather than pacifying Lan Na first and then resorting to a "classic north-south pincer operation," already tested and proved so successful by Bayinnaung two hundred years earlier.

deserved, and left his attempts abortive, making his reign one of the shortest and most insignificant among the Konbaung monarchs.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the rarity value of the *sittan* itself, its contents are also fairly valuable, for the document belongs to the category of primary source. It is based on the statement presented by the Shan themselves, whose own historical observations cannot be found in any other records, with old Shan chronicles virtually all lost now. Covering the lineage of hereditary rulers of Monè from the Nyaungyan to the early Konbaung periods, with some references to a set of Burmese appointive officials deployed at the Shan principality, whose appointment and function are not recorded in dynastic sources, this *sittan* surely casts new light on the administrative measures taken by the successive Burmese dynasties toward the Shan periphery. This shall be discussed in due course.

### Monè (Mäng Nai)

Monè was a Shan principality governed by the hereditary ruler called *sawbwa* (*caopha* in Shan; lit. Lord of Heaven), who was one of the “*ko-sawbwa*” (*nine-sawbwawas*), a customary Nyaungyan term reserved for the lords of nine major Shan domains (LBHK: *passim*; cf. HMN III: 152; ROB III: 89).<sup>24</sup> Located in the middle of the main route connecting the heartland of Burma to the trans-Salween Tai world, including the kingdom of Lan Na, then under Burmese suzerainty, the highland *sawbwa*-ship was strategically highly important to Nyaungyan monarchs. According to the chronicle account, Monè took Burmese vassalage for the first time in 1557 when King Bayinnaung, the “Victor of the Ten Directions,” on his way to Lan Na arrived at the city (UK II: 307-12; Ann-CMC: 261). The tributary relationship probably ceased in the 1590s, during the reign of Nandabayin, the son and successor to Bayinnaung, when the inorganically extended empire was rapidly disintegrating with one prince (or *bayin*) after another declaring his independence from and going into rebellion against the center, Pegu.

While Lower Burma was in turmoil with Toungoo, Prome, Arakan and even Ayutthaya under King Naresuan challenging Peguan supremacy, a ruler of Nyaungyan (a middle-sized domain on the southern fringe of the Central Plain), another son of Bayinnaung by an inferior queen, pacified the rice-growing Burmese heartland of Upper Burma and secured demographic resources relatively unaffected by the recent social disturbances of the waning dynasty. Consequently he established a royal line of his own

<sup>23</sup> According to Koenig (1990: 198), “There is no evidence to suggest ill health and some to indicate physical vigor [of Naungdawgyi],” thus “there is at least some possibility that he was poisoned by his brother [Hsinbyushin].”

<sup>24</sup> A royal order of 1605 (ROB I: 181) relates that Nyaungyan Min, the founder of the dynasty, appointed the *nine-sawbwawas*, although the reliability of this order is rather low. Meanwhile, Alaung-hpaya, in an official letter to the British authority in India, claimed his suzerainty over the *ko-sawbwa* (ROB III: 92). The other eight *sawbwawas* were those of: Kale in the Upper Chindwin; Mohnyin (Mäng Yang), Mogaung (Mäng Köng), Bhamo (Man Mö) in the Upper Irrawaddy; Momeik (Mäng Mit) in the Shweli valley; Hsenwi (Sænwi), Hsipaw (Sipö) in the highlands to the east of Ava; Yawngghwe (Yöngghui), western neighbor of Monè, in the highlands to the southeast of Ava.



at Ava in 1600.<sup>25</sup> Nyaungyan Min's first act as a champion of Upper Burma was to launch a series of military campaigns to the Shan Highlands, as part of a further manpower search for upcoming expeditions against Lower Burma.<sup>26</sup> First Mohnyin and Mogaung to the north in the Upper Irrawaddy; next Yawnghwe in the southeastern Highlands; then Bhamo in the Upper Irrawaddy; followed by Monè and surrounding domains in the southeastern Highlands; then Mogaung again; and finally Hsenwi with Hsipaw and Momeik in the eastern Highlands, all fell to the Avan forces that, with each victory, were augmented with fresh Shan auxiliaries (UK III: 118-35). However, immediately after the death of Nyaungyan Min in early 1606 on his way back from the Hsenwi campaign, Monè, perhaps allied to King Naresuan of Ayutthaya, showed its restiveness, attempting to invade Ava, though unsuccessfully (Ann-CMC: 267n).

Probably soon after the failed attempt, Monè accepted Avan suzerainty again, as a contingent from the Shan domain was enlisted in a Nyaungyan expedition against Toungoo, the rival center of Ava, in 1609 (UK III: 148).<sup>27</sup> Yet again, Monè defied the Nyaungyan monarch when the *sawbwa* with his men deserted from the Burmese army on campaign to Lan Na in 1614, fleeing to the Upper Mekong region where they were stationed with a force of Lao aid (174).<sup>28</sup> Never forgetting his grudge against the Monè *sawbwa*, Anauk-hpetlun ordered in 1622 his younger brother and generals to capture the fugitive lord still stationed along the Mekong, as a result of which the restive *sawbwa* was finally taken down to the palace of Anauk-hpetlun in Pegu (184-5).<sup>29</sup> This is the necessary historical background of Monè, with which the following shall be read.

## The content of the *sittan* and analysis

### *Introductory statement*

1) On 11 waxing Tawthalin of the year 1125 (2 September 1763), Monè *sawbwa-amat* [chief councilor of the *sawbwa*], Saing Hèlon, born 5, age 60, and *sa-yei* [secretary], Saing Tamaing, born 4, age 30, being examined concerning the boundaries, lists, the lineage of the hereditary rulers, the new year and end of Lent homage presents to the king, and the customary procedure of the obsequies for the *sawbwa* and of the succession to office, stated:

<sup>25</sup> While the Aung-Thwins (2012: 143) call this dynasty the "Second Ava (Inwa)" and Lieberman (1984: 48) the "Restored Toungoo," I choose the "Nyaungyan," the term also common in traditional historiography of Burma, for it is less lengthy than the former two. Than Tun, a renowned Burmese historian, also prefers "Nyaungyan," though spelling it "Nyaung Yan" (ROB I: ix).

<sup>26</sup> In addition, he was in search of luxurious trade items, such as amber and rubies, on which he would declare a monopoly (ROB I: 9).

<sup>27</sup> Note that the HMN (III: 152) lists no Monè contingent, although it refers to the *ko-sawbwa* (*nine-sawbwas*) in the expedition, while the YT (III: 31) mentions the Monè *sawbwa* enlisted in the campaign.

<sup>28</sup> The *sawbwa* first returned home, where he rounded up people, treasure, horses and elephants, then crossed the Salween again to the east.

<sup>29</sup> The chronicle furnishes no information on his fate. Given the depth and length of the grudge born by Anauk-hpetlun, it is very unlikely that the *sawbwa* was ever pardoned to return home alive.

As explained above, the statement was made during the reign of Naungdawgyi, whose administrative endeavor to carry out a kingdom-wide survey has so far been unknown, thereby making it unclear whether the Monè *sittan* was collected as part of a larger census operation or taken independently. In either case, it must have been closely associated with the Burmese expedition against Lan Na, which had just been successfully completed nine days before the statement was made. Administrative control over Monè, with its strategic and logistic significance, was now far more crucial than in the previous reign.

#### *Accounts on the Lineage of Rulers*

2) In the year 995 (1633/34) La Hkan was appointed *sawbwa* of Monè [by the king]. In the year 998 (1636/37) La Hkan came to take charge of Monè. *Sikès* were appointed and dispatched from the capital. [They were:] Let Ywei; *Hkaing Hmu*; and Nga Kyawsan of the Shan Cavalry Bloodbond Brotherhood.<sup>30</sup>

The appointment of La Hkan as *sawbwa* was definitely made by King Thalun, who had just successfully completed his military campaign in and around Lan Na in February 1633 (UK III: 209; Ann-CMC: 272-3). With his control over the trans-Salween region secured, and his plan to transfer the capital from Pegu to Ava,<sup>31</sup> the third Nyaungyan monarch then established a new *sawbwa*-ship at Monè, the gateway to Lan Na, because the local ruling house had been evacuated and dissolved due to the battle with the Burmese in the previous decade, as seen above.

As the statement begins with the appointment of La Hkan, he was probably the founder of a new line of the hereditary ruler in Monè.<sup>32</sup> Another *sittan* of Monè dated 1692 testifies, “The foundation of the present city [of Monè] was established by La Hkan” (ROB II: 286). He was the founding father of both the new local dynasty and the city itself. Despite his founding effort, however, La Hkan’s profile before (actually even after) taking over the *sawbwa*-ship, including his connection with the previous ruling house and his qualities that made Thalun nominate him as a new ruler, is unknown.<sup>33</sup> A three-year interregnum between 1633 and 1636, when La Hkan was appointed *sawbwa* and when he actually came to Monè to take over the office, indicates that before deployed to the highland principality, he first had to serve at the Avan court to be acquainted with

<sup>30</sup> Although Let Ywei and *Hkaing Hmu* do not sound like complete Burmese names (actually the latter is merely an official rank rather than a proper name), my translation strictly follows the original text.

<sup>31</sup> Thalun “had made clear his determination to dwell at Ava as early as November 1629” (Lieberman 1984: 58). The transfer of the Nyaungyan capital by Thalun in 1635 also enhanced the strategic importance of Monè as a staging point for the trans-Salween campaigns from the new capital in Upper Burma. From Pegu in the Delta, eastern expeditions to Lan Na would have taken a more southern route through the Karen Hills, entirely bypassing Monè.

<sup>32</sup> *Sittans*, including those from the Shan areas, usually bear information on the lineage of the hereditary ruler, from the founder to the present one who was making the statement. See the Shan *sittans* of Wuntho and Tein-nyin in the BSTN (367, 379).

<sup>33</sup> He might have been recruited from another Shan domain to be installed on the throne of Monè, not an uncommon political measure taken, though not freely and widely practiced, by Burmese monarchs.

Burmese political protocol and the Nyaungyan monarch himself, who sought to forge a personal bond with the future ruler of a remote dependency.<sup>34</sup>

The appointment of the *sitkè* in the text is of much historiographic interest and importance, as few records from the Nyaungyan era, none on Monè, refer to the Burmese official deployed to the Shan areas.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, it has been customarily assumed that assignment of the *sitkè* to the Shan States was initiated by the Konbaung monarchs (cf. Taylor 2009: 35). The *sittan* of Monè thus reveals that the early Nyaungyan leaders had already instituted the practice a century and a half before the conventional dating. Before discussing the Monè *sitkè*, we shall first look at normal functions of the *sitkè* in general.

Literally meaning “military leader,” before the 17th century the title was conferred upon high-ranking military officers.<sup>36</sup> The early Nyaungyan leaders bestowed new tasks on the *sitkè*, when they introduced a series of innovative administrative measures to the lowlands of Burma. The *sitkè* of the Nyaungyan period became a deputy to the *myowun* (a centrally-appointed governor of the provincial center of Burma proper), and came to take charge of police and military affairs. Besides the *sitkè*, also serving under a *myowun* were *sayeis* (secretaries), *nahkans* (royal spies), and other minor functionaries (Lieberman 1984: 116; BSTN: 38; Taylor 2009: 34-5).<sup>37</sup>

Domains of *myowun*-ship had formerly been held as appanages by *bayins*, sub-kings, who were sons and brothers of Bayinnaung and Nandabayin, the High Kings, and who would eventually challenge central authority, ultimately leading to the demise of the Toungoo Empire. The first Nyaungyan kings, having learned crucial lessons from the previous dynasty, replaced these *bayins* with *myowuns*, thereby transforming restive sub-kings into mere governors (Lieberman 1984: 114n). The systematic deployment of a set of crown officials to major lowland cities thus brought a “profound effect on the nature of royal politics” and constituted a “highly important stage in Burmese political development” (BSTN: 19). It was the turning point in the institutional history of the state in Burma.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> This practice seems to have originated in Bayinnaung’s conquest of the entire Shan realm in the late 1550s, when he sent scions of the subjugated *sawbwās* to Pegu (UK II: 303, 317). The LBHK explains the procedure of inheritance when a *sawbwa* died in his own country while his son or younger brother, an heir-presumptive, stayed under the “royal golden sole” in Ava. The custom would last until the very end of the Burmese monarchy itself.

<sup>35</sup> The *sitkè* of Hsenwi is frequently mentioned in the LBHK (11, 89, 90, 104, 268). Unsatisfactorily, in each case, the *sitkè*, along with the *sawbwa*, is mentioned merely as a recipient of royal orders and ministerial correspondence, without any description of his identity, function, or any other details.

<sup>36</sup> The royal order of 1638 (ROB I: 107) defines *sitkè* as a chief of 100 soldiers. However, this definition seems an exception to the Burmese military tradition, as records from both before and after the 17th century suggest that the *sitkè* held a much higher position. Thus, for example, a main Burmese force of 10,000 on an expedition (with another four forces consisting of 320,000 troops) against Monè in 1557 was led by Bayinnaung, under whom a *sitkè* and a *tat-hmu* (lit. military chief) were serving (UK II: 306). In any case, *sitkè* is usually defined, “the deputy commander on an expedition” (BSTN: xvi), or “second-in-command of a military unit” (Myanmar 1998: 118).

<sup>37</sup> Under the Konbaung administration, two *sitkès* were deployed at major cities of Burma proper, one at middle-sized ones, and none at minor ones (MMOK IV: 104).

<sup>38</sup> BSTN aptly concludes, “The final shape of the Burmese state and administration was established

Now back to the Monè *sitkè* of the 1630s. Given the above-mentioned administratively innovative character of the early Nyaungyan monarchs, it is hard to regard the deployment of the *sitkè* to the highland principality as a separate practice from that applied to the provincial capitals of lowland Burma. It will make more sense to consider them a parallel phenomenon. If we could generalize from the Konbaung source (MMOK IV: 113), the Monè *sitkè* of the 17th century was, besides the traditional function of a garrison leader,<sup>39</sup> also assigned an advisory, if not supervisory, role in the *sawbwa*'s council.

As crown agents in the highland administration outside the zone of direct Burmese control, a *sitkè*'s function was also comparable to that of *nahkans*, "royal ears," who were posted at lowland gubernatorial centers, and "bore primary responsibility for monitoring the loyalty of the governor and for warning Ava of official abuses that were likely to cause unrest" (Lieberman 1984: 116). Monitored by the *sitkè* in the Shan principality was, of course, not a *myowun* but a *sawbwa*, whose dubious allegiance always annoyed the Avan monarch. The simultaneous appointment of the *sawbwa* and *sitkè* to Monè suggests strong royal intention of establishing close, if not amicable, administrative association between them.<sup>40</sup>

With the case of Monè told, then arises another question: Were *sitkès* posted to other Shan States under Nyaungyan Burma?<sup>41</sup> As stated above, the LBHK, written by Thiri Uzana, a minister who served the last three Nyaungyan monarchs, frequently mentions the *sitkè* of Hsenwi, along with the *sawbwa*, as a recipient of royal orders and ministerial notifications (LBHK: 11, 89, 90, 104, 268).<sup>42</sup> Since the official documents from Ava to Hsenwi exemplify those addressed to other Shan domains, the LBHK does not bother to reproduce and amplify each of them, thus leaving it unclear whether *sitkès* were also included as the addressee in the documents destined for other Shan domains. However, now we know for certain that *sitkès* were actually posted to Hsenwi and Monè, and the LBHK always states that the official document to other Shan domains, including the *ko-sawbwa*-ship, is written likewise (as the one addressed to Hsenwi).<sup>43</sup> Therefore it

in this period [during the reigns of the first three Nyaungyan kings]."

<sup>39</sup> A royal edict issued by Bayinnaung in 1573 refers to a Monè *sitkè* called Nat-kyaw-bala who was ordered to command a contingent of 700 to suppress a Karenni rebellion (ROB II: 102).

<sup>40</sup> There still remains a question over the length of a *sitkè*'s tenure, on which the *sittan*, only mentioning the appointment of *sitkès* each time the *sawbwa* was appointed, bears no information.

<sup>41</sup> In the trans-Salween Tai-speaking realm, Chiang Mai and Chiang Sæn, two *myowun*-ships of Lan Na, maintained the office of *sitkè*, while a Burmese document from the late 1720s (*List* 80, #4: *gè r*) refers to *sitkè(s)* in the Khœn dominant principality of Cheng Tung (Keng Tung). The deployment of the *sitkè* to the Khœn domain was most likely made after the rebellion of its lord, Sampi, in 1708, as a result of which Cheng Tung was directly ruled by a Burmese noble, the *myoza* of Singu (LBHK: 12; Ann-CMC: 281).

<sup>42</sup> The edicts concerned: the establishment of the heir apparent in Ava; the ascension of the heir apparent to the Avan throne; swearing an oath of allegiance to the new Avan king; presenting gifts to the new Avan king; and keeping law and order in Hsenwi after the death of the *sawbwa*.

<sup>43</sup> Like Monè, the other *ko-sawbwa*-ships with their location on the periphery of Upper Burma were also strategically important for the defense of the capital zone: Kale against Manipuri raids; Mogaung, Mohnyin, Bhamo, Momeik, Hsenwi, and Hsipaw against Chinese invasions; and Yawnghwe against Ayutthaya marches. Of these, Chinese invasions were a real threat to the



is likely that the appointment of *sitkès* to other Shan States, especially to those of the *ko-sawbwa*-ship, was made during the Nyaungyan period, although how extensive and systematic it was, and when it began, are unknown.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, we know from Konbaung sources that Alaunghpaya, the founder of the dynasty, appointed *sitkès* to Momeik (Māng Mit), Hsenwi, and Monè, together with lowland provincial centers such as Prome, Toungoo, and Rangoon (ROB III: 211).<sup>45</sup> In addition, Hsinbyushin, soon after his ascension to the throne, systematically dispatched a pair of *sitkès* to major Shan domains,<sup>46</sup> including the former *nine-sawbwa*-ships (Monè, Yawnghwe, Momeik, Hsipaw, Bhamo, Mohnyin, Mogaung, and Kale), along with other lesser domains of *myoza*- and *tatpaung-za*-ships (KBZ I: 347).<sup>47</sup> Because of

Burmese capital, as it almost fell to the forces of Ming remnants expelled from Yunnan by the Qing in the late 1650s (Ann-CMC: 275). Previously in the late 1630s, Thalun ordered a northern expedition to the Sino-Shan borderlands to “stop the Chinese who came beyond the point where they were allowed to come for trade” (ROB I: 76; cf. Hkemeindha 1948: 159). Meanwhile, the first Manipuri raid on the upper Chindwin region, i.e., the Shan domain, was recorded in 1648 (UK III: 248). Thalun immediately sent an army to repel the Manipuri force. It is unlikely that even after this military campaign Ava still entrusted the defense of the vulnerable peripheral region to the charge of the native leaders.

<sup>44</sup> GUBSS (pt. 2, vol. III: 360) mentions that Burmese *sitkès* ruled Wuntho in the years 1697-1714. Bhamo in the years 1668-74 might as well have been governed by *sitkès*, although GUBSS (pt. 2, vol. I: 59) refers to the ruler from Ava merely as “Burmese General.” In any case, it is not clear whether these *sitkès* were only temporarily assigned in the absence of ruling *sawbwās* in Wuntho and Bhamo, or a regular feature in the local administration. Meanwhile, Avan administrators were probably deployed to Kale too, as the western Shan domain was, as just mentioned, of strategic importance to the defense of the upper Chindwin region against the Manipuri raids, and thus territorially more integrated into the Nyaungyan state than the other *sawbwa*-ships. In the Burmese inscription of 1590, Kale was part of *Sein Taing* (*Sein* country) that also included Bhamo, thus denoting the country of the Shan, while in the 1649 inscription Kale was regarded as a part of *Sunarparanta Taing* that consisted of the Burmese towns of Sagu, Salin, and other districts along the Irrawaddy and Chindwin (MMOK II: 80; SMK V: 148). *Sunarparanta Taing*, together with *Tampadipa Taing*, constituted the “nucleus of the Burmese polity” (Aung-Thwin 1998: 57). BSTN (357) describes the western Shan domains as “quite Burmanized,” meaning the upper Chindwin Shan society was more exposed to Burmese political and cultural influence than the northern and eastern Shan areas. The geopolitically conceptualized transfer of Kale from *Sein Taing* to *Sunarparanta* shows that the “Burmanization” of the western Shan domains was already in progress during the Nyaungyan era.

<sup>45</sup> Not only the *sitkès*, a standard set of Burmese administrators, *myowuns* and *nahkans*, were also appointed to the upland principalities on this occasion.

<sup>46</sup> This was also confirmed by Dr Richardson, who visited various Shan domains, including Monè, in 1837. He noted, “There are at the court of each of the other tsoboas [*sawbwās*] two tsetkays [*sitkès*], also appointed from Ava” (*Journal*: 487).

<sup>47</sup> Two principal trans-Salween Tai states, Cheng Hung and Cheng Tung (Keng Tung) are also included in the list, while for some reason Hsenwi is missing. *Sawbwa* (or *caopha* in this context) was a self-claimed title even held by the chief of a petty domain who was usually classified as *myoza* by the Burmese monarch. Meanwhile *sawbwa*-ship was conferred upon the lord of an influential and substantial principality, to whom a *tatpaung-za*, taking control over a circle of towns and villages, and obliged to supply a force for the *sawbwa*’s army, was subordinate (MMOK IV: 111). According to the Monè *sittan*, Maing Pun, Maing Pan, and Kyaing Hkan were the *tatpaung-za*-ships under Monè.

their rural origins, Alaunghpaya and his sons were unfamiliar with court punctilio and statecraft, and thus had to rely on the treatise submitted by Thiri Uzana as a valuable guide to conduct royal ceremonies and governmental business. It is hardly possible that the early Konbaung leaders created anew the systematic appointment of *sitkès* to the Shan Highlands.<sup>48</sup> They followed the precedent set up by the early Nyaungyan leaders.

3) In the year 1037 (1675/76) La Hkan, *sawbwa*, was no more, and Shin Hnin-shwei, *myosi-za*, was appointed *wun* [by the king]. *Kaunghan-hmu* and Nga Chitsan of the Shan cavalry [were] the *myosi-sitkès*. In the year 1038 (1676/77) San Hkan, son of La Hkan, was appointed *sawbwa*.

La Hkan, according to the text, was on the throne of Monè from the year 995 (1633/34) to 1037 (1675/76), enjoying a long reign of forty-two years.<sup>49</sup> However, another *sittan* of Monè dated 1668 (ROB I: 326) was submitted by a *sawbwa* named Hkun Kyaw, whose name is apparently missing in the list of hereditary rulers in the 1763 *sittan*. The omission has probably something to do with the pacification of Monè by the Burmese in the early 1670s, which must have ousted Hkun Kyaw from the throne (UK III: 289-90).<sup>50</sup> He was a disgrace to his descendents of the 1760s who were thus unwilling to record his name in the *sittan* to be kept at the official document repository in the Burmese capital.

Although the post of *myosi-za* is unfamiliar and the profile of Shin Hnin-shwei is obscure,<sup>51</sup> this unknown figure was promoted (or demoted) from *myosi-za* to *wun*. As *wun* simply means “minister” or “officer,” there were numerous *wuns* in governmental services under the Burmese monarchy. In this highland context the title should connote “officer in charge of a town,” i.e. *myowun*, because Shin Hnin-shwei came to the post of *wun* with *sitkès*, who mainly functioned as a deputy to the *myowun* in lowland provincial centers, and he replaced the deceased *sawbwa* whose main task had been, as that of the *myowun*, to rule a domain.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> They probably increased the number of the Shan domains to which *sitkès* were assigned, though.

<sup>49</sup> Just to note, the longest reign of the Nyaungyan monarchs, that of Minyè-kyawdin, only lasted about twenty-five years.

<sup>50</sup> The cause of the Burmese expedition is unknown. It may have been associated with the Chinese invasion of the Burmese capital area in the late 1650s and early 1660s, during which a group of Chinese marauders retreated to and hid in Monè (UK III: 265-6; Ann-CMC: 275-6).

<sup>51</sup> “*Myosi-za*” should consist of three words, *myo*, *si*, and *za*. Without a *si*, *myoza*, literally an “eater of the town,” commonly denotes either a Burmese appanage holder whose residence was not in the appanage itself but in the capital, or a hereditary chief of the lesser Shan domain, “little *sawbwa*,” so to speak. *Si* in the context may mean, among some possibilities, “prosperous,” which makes the meaning of *myosi* a “prosperous town.” The *myosi* of the text then points to a prosperous town in Monè. Meanwhile, although Shin Hnin-shwei’s ethnic origin is unknown, his name indicates his Burman descent. Does this suggest that he was not a Shan chief of the *myosi* but a Burmese noble or royal member, who was granted the *myosi*, a prosperous district of Monè, as his appanage by the Avan monarch? If this is actually the case, Burmese kings could claim authority over some parts of the Shan domain, thereby eroding the *sawbwa*’s hereditary right over the territory and its people.

<sup>52</sup> Note that, according to the GUBSS (pt. 2, vol. I: 336), a Burmese governor of Mogaung in the 1830s was called not *myowun* but “Mogaung *Woon* [*wun*].” The Monè *sittan* never calls the

Not only to Monè, also to Hsenwi was a *myowun* appointed in 1688 upon the death of a *sawbwa* to fill the interregnum (UK III: 315; cf. LBHK: 425). Years later this *myowun* was nominated *sawbwa* by the Avan monarch. Shin Hnin Shwei, the *wun* of Monè, would not become *sawbwa* himself, as he was apparently not of Shan royalty, and a new *sawbwa* was appointed the next year. Hereafter, all Burmese *wuns* deployed to Monè were appointed alternately with *sawbwas*. Then arises a question: Were Burmese *wuns* as rulers of the Shan domain recalled to Ava each time new *sawbwas* were appointed; or did they jointly take charge of local administration with the *sawbwa*? Later cases in the text indicate that the latter is more likely (see no. 7 below).

In any case, unlike lowland provincial centers where princely *bayins*, or local sovereigns, had been altogether replaced with centrally appointed governors, the deployment of the *myowun* to Monè did not lead to a total abolition of the *sawbwa*-ship, as a son of the late *sawbwa* would be installed on the throne the next year. However, the Nyaungyan dynasts at least succeeded in exercising direct administration in the highland principality through the royal agent, though temporarily (only for the interregnum), and also probably in jointly ruling the domain by the crown representative and the local prince. Furthermore, by interfering in the right of hereditary succession possessed by the native ruling house, and institutionalizing the alternate appointment of and diarchy by the *sawbwa* and *myowun* in Monè, they were able to rank and link the local sovereign with a political hierarchy centered at the Avan court. The appointment of the *wun* to the highland principality was another crucial move taken by the Nyaungyan monarch for the transformation of a restive polity on the imperial periphery into a tame, if not very loyal, dependency, a corresponding and concomitant effort with the deployment of the *sitkè* seen above.

*Sitkès* were appointed again, although the difference, if any, between *myosi-sitkè* and mere *sitkè* is unclear.<sup>53</sup> Concerning the installation of San Hkan on the local throne, a one-year interregnum between La Hkan's death and San Hkan's enthronement, during which Shin Hnin-shwei, a Burmese *wun*, came to take care of local affairs, implies that San Hkan was, as his father in the 1630s, rendering crown service at the Burmese capital when his father died. This obligatory practice was not limited to the ruling house of Monè. Elsewhere in Hsenwi, when the late *sawbwa*'s son and son-in-law were contending for the *sawbwa*-ship in 1688, the Nyaungyan king favored the latter who had years of experience in court service, and ordered the real son to first serve under the "royal golden sole" before pleading for the local throne (UK III: 315, 328).<sup>54</sup> When the

Nyaungyan official *myowun*; he is always referred to as *wun*, although his Konbaung counterparts are referred to as *myowun*, as shown below. Meanwhile, the LBHK (268) refers to customary dispatch of royal agents to Shan domains upon the death of *sawbwas* to take charge of their obsequies. It further explains that if the successor to the deceased *sawbwa* was at home, governance of the domain was entrusted to him; but if absent for serving at the Nyaungyan court, Burmese agents sent from Ava would take care of the local affairs. "*Wun*" in the text might be a local term for these Burmese agents, whose official title is unknown, not mentioned by the LBHK.

<sup>53</sup> *Kaunghan-hmu*, one of the *myosi-sitkès*, was a Burmese title, a chief of the "Burman descendants of Chiang Mai organized into armed forces by King Thalun" (ROB X: 103).

<sup>54</sup> This is another instance of Burmese intervention in local succession disputes and manipulation of the nominee.

son refused to accept the royal decision, he was promptly and fatally punished by Avan troops, and several years later his entire family perished in a battle with the Burmese forces that included a contingent of Monè led by the *sawbwa* (San Hkan?) and other Shan auxiliaries.<sup>55</sup>

As the consequence of disobedience to royal orders was directly and mercilessly exposed to and deeply understood by the Shan princes, apprenticeship at the Burmese court became a regular custom for a native adolescent from the imperial periphery and a required qualification for the *sawbwa*-ship in the Highlands.<sup>56</sup> This compulsory measure succeeded in domesticating autonomous native sovereigns, as lords of Shan domains now owed their princely status to the Burmese king, whose personal favor they had to earn, and whose personal anger they had to avoid, by rendering service at the Avan court. They needed a Burmese endorsement to be nominated as a new ruler to take charge of their own domain now under the temporally rule of the Burmese *wun*.

4) In the year 1056 (1694/95) San Hkan was no more, and Deiwa-lek-ya and Tuyin-kathu were appointed *wuns* [by the king]. As [they were] oppressive, [the native officials went to the capital and] made a plea under the royal golden sole, and [the king] recalled them. Subsequently Myat-no, son of the younger brother of the late *sawbwa*, and Thiri-kan-kaung were appointed *wuns*. Nga Neisan [was appointed] *myosi-sitkè*. In the year 1068 (1706/07) Myat-no was appointed *sawbwa*.

The two *wuns* who had been ordered to succeed the late *sawbwa* and to take charge of the local administration were summoned back to Ava due to their exploitative rule.<sup>57</sup> What is noteworthy here is that the Burmese administrators, not vainly sitting in office, actually ruled, though in a malevolent way, wielding arbitrary power in the remote highland domain. Furthermore, the local dignitaries, rather than resorting to force, their traditional way of expressing frustration and anger at the Burmese court, chose to comply with a politically more appropriate and civil procedure, begging the Avan monarch to recall the oppressive rulers. The lower degree of the principality's restiveness and the greater degree of embedment of Burmese directorial routine among the Monè gentry indicate that the more than sixty-year Nyaungyan effort to strengthen central supervision over the governance of the peripheral domain had grown effective by the end of the 17th century. Correspondingly, the waning power, political as well as physical, of the native royalty became apparent.

The new *wuns* who replaced the oppressive predecessors were Myat-no, belonging to the local ruling house, and Thiri-kan-kaung, seemingly of Burman nobility. The appointment of a nephew of the late *sawbwa* as *wun*,<sup>58</sup> a Burmese administrative post,

<sup>55</sup> The chronicle of Hsenwi, however, has a completely different account for the corresponding period, with a peaceful transfer of power from Cao Sāhompha via Cao Hanpha, his wife, to Cao Khun Khamsōngpha, their son, in the years 1684/85-1694/95 (Renoo 2007: 395).

<sup>56</sup> Most of the *sawbwās* listed in the Monè *sittān* had experience in serving at the Burmese court.

<sup>57</sup> Deployment of two *wuns* was rather irregular to usual Burmese practice of appointing one *myowun* to each lowland provincial center.

<sup>58</sup> As shown above, in Hsenwi a son-in-law of the late *sawbwa* was also appointed *myowun* in 1688,



along with a Burmese official surely led to a diminution in the prerogative and prestige of the native prince, formerly a supreme lord, who was now marginally ranked in a status hierarchy extended from and centered on the Irrawaddy Basin. The promotion of Myat-no years later to the rank of *sawbwa* further highlighted, in the eyes of the local populace, the political emasculation and subordination of the native prince vis-à-vis the Burmese monarch, as he had to largely rely on the favor and confirmation of the High King of Ava for his post.<sup>59</sup> *Sawbwa*-ship thus became something to be authorized by the Burmese monarch, while the aura of the “Lord of Heaven” diminished correspondingly and considerably.

5) In the year 1078 (1716/7) *Sawbwa* Myat-no was no more, and Nga Waluthu-mana and Gasa-pyinnya were appointed *wuns* [by the king]. *Myo-sitkès* [were] Nga Hkan-nyo and Nga Shwei-kyaw. In the year 1081 (1719/20) Thuwa, son of Myat-no, was appointed *sawbwa*. *Myosi-sitkès* [were] *Tu-byè-hmu* and *Thwei-htau-k-yi*. In the year 1097 (1735/36) Thuwa was no more, and Tuyin-zeita and Sathwa-chaung-za were appointed *wuns*. *Sitkès* [were] *Kaunghan-hmu*, Nga Sanmya, and Nga Chit-hpyu. In the year 1098 (1736/7) Kyawswa, son of Thuwa, was appointed *sawbwa*. *Sitkès* [were] Nga Shwei-san of the *nan-twin-myin* [palace cavalry?] and Nga Shwei-u of the *tapet-swè-shi-myin*.

This twenty-year period saw a smooth, steady transition of power from Burmese agents to local rulers, and vice-versa, without a sign of irregular appointment.<sup>60</sup> This is notable as the imperial structure of Nyaungyan Burma during the period was rapidly dissolving, due to rebellions on the periphery, a series of Manipuri raids on the Burmese heartland, and ministerial struggles and related corruption within the court. Even the rebellion of Chiang Mai in the late 1720s, and the subsequent astonishing and humiliating triple defeat of the Nyaungyan punitive forces to the neighboring rebels, which must have revealed the rapidly declining military strength of Ava, did not ignite any local uprising in Monè. Again, this corroborates that Burmese political procedure had been largely standardized and deeply entrenched in the court of a highland dependency, which is also attested by the fact that now the *sawbwa* obtained a name of apparent Burmese origin, Kyawswa.<sup>61</sup>

6) In the year 1106 (1744/5) *Sawbwa* Kyawswa was no more and Keik-ti-ok-tama-kyawdin, Yè-weilu, Nara-kyawthu, and Sanda-kyawthu were appointed *wuns* [by the king]. *Myosi-sitkès* [were] Nga Bè and *Myin-gaung* [captain of horse] Nga Kyaw. In the year 1107 (1745/6) while Sanda, younger brother of Kyawswa, was

to be promoted to *sawbwa* in 1691 (UK III: 315, 328).

<sup>59</sup> The UK (III: 380) records that in 1706 the Monè *sawbwa* presented his daughter to the Avan king. This *sawbwa* was definitely Myat-no. It is unclear whether the present of a bride resulted in the promotion of Myat-no to *sawbwa*, or was made as a token of his gratitude for the appointment.

<sup>60</sup> Note, however, that not only *myosi-sitkès* and *myo-sitkès*, but plain *sitkès* also begin to figure in the text. Meanwhile, the difference in their rank and function is unclear.

<sup>61</sup> Actually, the name “Myat-no” might as well have been of Burmese origin.

staying at Monè, a pair of local dignitaries made a plea under the royal golden sole, and [the king] appointed Nga Zaw, royal envoy, and other high-ranking officials with the *amein-daw* [royal order] to enthrone Sanda at the *myo* [i.e. Monè]. *Myosi-sitkè* [was] Sanda-nantathu. *Shan-myin* [Shan cavalry] [was] Nga Neisan.

The generous, unprecedented appointment of four *wuns* in the text was probably ascribed to the difficult circumstances under which Ava had endured for years: on the eastern periphery of the empire, the *myowun*-ship of Chiang Mai fell to local rebels in the late 1720s; from the west, a series of annual Manipuri raids devastated the nuclear zone and almost took the capital in the late 1730s; in the south, a major revolt broke out in Pegu in 1740, eventually leading to the founding of an independent Lower Burma kingdom that would sack the Burmese capital in 1752.<sup>62</sup> Thus Ava in dire straits must have taken a precautionary action, preventing Monè from conspiring with either Chiang Mai or Pegu against itself.<sup>63</sup> This would have caused a domino effect among the neighboring Shan domains, thereby leading to a total upheaval throughout the Highlands, and further jeopardizing the capital area already devastated for years.

The appointment of Nanda as *sawbwa* was rather irregular in two ways. First, unlike previous cases, it was made not by royal will but by local request. This was Monè's first attempt in more than a century to request Ava to appoint a new *sawbwa*, although the Shan principality had once asked for a royal recall of oppressive *wuns*.<sup>64</sup> This daring act by the Shan was based on a near-equal footing between Monè and Ava, which was made possible by the rapid diminution in the latter's prestige and military strength during its final years.

Next, distinct from his predecessors who were sons of, or a generation younger than, the deceased *sawbwa*, Nanada was the late *sawbwa*'s younger brother, who, upon the appointment, was at around the age of sixteen.<sup>65</sup> The young prince seems to have never been trained at the Avan court, as the *sittan* emphasizes the irregularity in crowning a new lord of Monè in his own local estate by the Burmese agents sent from Ava (this is also the first case in the *sittan*). The new *sawbwa* was thus an exception to the century-old Burmese custom of choosing a nominee who had spent years in Ava under royal tutorage. These irregularities notwithstanding, this appointment was allowed as an exception, because the Shan side took the upper hand over the Burmese in the negotiation of appointment, due to the imminent danger surrounding the Nyaungyan court. Ava, no longer able to exercise superior military influence over its vassal on the periphery, had no choice but to make a concession.

Yet, it is still remarkable that Monè did not follow Chiang Mai which had already rebelled against Ava more than a decade earlier and become an autonomous kingdom; and the Shan principality still accepted Avan vassalage as late as the mid-1740s, during the turbulent final years of the dynasty itself. This is especially so as social conditions of

<sup>62</sup> For the gradual downfall of Ava, see Lieberman, *Administrative Cycles*, Chapter 4.

<sup>63</sup> Actually, a marriage alliance was established between Chiang Mai and Pegu at the time (HMN III: 373).

<sup>64</sup> See no. 4 above.

<sup>65</sup> When the *sittan* was submitted in 1763, he was 34.

the Central Plain were much worse than in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when Monè repeatedly attempted to sever its relations with the Burmese kings and to regain its sovereign power. With bureaucratic tendencies embedded in the local administration and the aura of the “Lord of Heaven” gone, Burmese authorization had become an important, indispensable source of legitimacy of the *sawbwa* who had been politically and militarily emasculated.

7) In the year 1121 (1759/60) during the reign of the royal father [Alaung-hpaya], [the king] appointed Minyè-aung-hnaing as *myo-wun*; Kyawdin-nga-shwei-taung and Sit-tagaung-thiri-kyaw as *sitkè*; Setka-dawaya and Tuyin-zeiya-kyaw as *nahkan*; Deiwa-kyaw-hla and Setka-thatti as *myo-sayei*.

During the blank period in the text of fourteen years from 1745/6 to 1759/60, Ava, the capital of the Nyaungyan dynasty, fell to the army of Lower Burma, and the king with his family and courtiers were transported to Pegu where many of them perished. Then arose a new Burmese power based at Mok-hso-bo (Shwebo), a township in the Mu River valley, which, under the leadership of U Aung-zeiya, later known as Alaung-hpaya, eventually reunified the country. The rapid resurgence of an Upper Burma-based polity and its reunification of Burma suddenly changed the political prospect of the Shan Highlands that had been more or less independent for a decade or so, but now had to accept Burmese suzerainty as well as its administrators again. According to Burmese records (KBZ I: 106, 149; ROB III: 211), Monè, with other neighboring Shan States, had already taken an oath of allegiance to the Konbaung monarch in 1755, and a group of Burmese officials consisting of *myowun*, *sitkè*, and *nahkan* (*sayei* not mentioned) were deployed to the Shan principality by 1758 at the latest.<sup>66</sup> Therefore the *sittan* either omitted the previous appointment of Konbaung agents recorded by the ROB, or misdated the year of the appointment.

The text refers to *myowun*, which is the first reference to the title, while under Nyaungyan Burma *wun* is exclusively used. It is also the first instance of appointing the *myowun* to Monè while the *sawbwa* was still alive on the throne, which indicates that a diarchy by the crown representative and the native prince was a norm practiced from the Nyaungyan era (see no. 3 above). Furthermore, a standard set of Burmese officers, a *myo-wun*, two *sitkès*, two *nahkans*, and two *myo-sayeis*, was for the first time introduced to Monè. Alaung-hpaya, though known for his politically conservative character, attempted administrative adjustment in the Shan Highlands with an extension of a standard set of Burmese officers from provincial centers of Burma proper to the Shan areas, which, for some reason, had been only partially accomplished under the previous dynasty.

8) In the year 1123 (1761/62) in the reign of the royal elder brother [Naungdawgyi],

<sup>66</sup> The ROB does not specify how many *myowuns*, *sitkès*, and *nahkans* were assigned to Monè. Hsenwi and Momeik (Māng Mit) as well as Prome, Toungoo, Rangoon, and other lowland towns are also mentioned by the ROB as the places to which Burmese officials were sent.

[the king] appointed Min-thinhkaya, Punya-pyatin, and Yanaung-dukyaw as *sitkè*; Letwè-thiri and Yan-hnok-set as *nahkan*; Nanda-thuriya and Bayathaman as *myo-sayei*.

Two years after the appointment of Burmese officials by Alaung-hpaya, rearrangement of personnel was made by Naungdawgyi, and new *sitkès*, *nahkans*, and *sayeis* were assigned to Monè. If this account can be taken straightforwardly, Burmese administrators were rotated in two years.<sup>67</sup> A two-year cycle seems a reasonable span for the tenure of the officers serving in the remote highlands, given that a three-year rotation was followed by Burmese garrisons at Chiang Mai (MMOK IV: 110). Meanwhile, there is another possibility that the appointment was connected to the Burmese regnal change. It could be part of the administrative custom a new king was expected to conduct soon after his enthronement, as the KBZ (I: 347; II: 228) records that both Hsinbyushin and Bagyidaw, immediately after their ascension to the throne, systematically dispatched a pair of *sitkès* to the Shan States.<sup>68</sup>

The text does not mention appointment of a new *myowun*, and it is therefore entirely unclear when and how Minyè-aung-hnaing, the *myowun* appointed by Alaung-hpaya, ended his term of office in Monè.<sup>69</sup> He might have been recalled to the capital when *sitkès* and other officers were newly assigned to Monè. In any case, the office of Monè *myowun* seems to have been abolished by 1786 at the latest, when the official correspondence to the Konbaung monarch from Monè was prepared by the *sawbwa*, *sitkès*, and local dignitaries, with no *myowun* included (ROB IV: 535). The changing geopolitical environment surrounding Monè required the Konbaung state to review its policy toward dependency in the highland periphery.

The end of Burmese rule over Chiang Mai in 1774 and subsequent battles with the rejuvenated eastern neighbor under King Taksin enhanced the strategic importance of Monè as a frontier base where a large Burmese garrison was stationed in anticipation of prolonged warfare with the allied forces of Siam and Lan Na. Eventually, not *myowun*, governor, but *bo-hmu*, commander, was to take charge of the principality.<sup>70</sup> Monè became the “seat of the presidency of the Burmese over the Shan principalities” (Yule 1968: 298), and “the head quarters of the force,” whence the *sitkè-daw-gyi* “lords it over the tsoboas [*sawbwas*]” (*Journal*: 487).<sup>71</sup> Consequently, in Monè during the 1830s, the

<sup>67</sup> The *sittan* refers to the reshuffle of Nyaungyan officers only subsequent to the death or enthronement of *sawbwas*, while these Konbaung administrators were appointed or recalled regardless of the circumstances under which the *sawbwa* was placed. This is understandable as the number of appointments during the Nyaungyan period that lasted about 150 years should be too numerous to record each time.

<sup>68</sup> These were part of “nationwide” deployment of Burmese administrators to the provincial centers of Upper and Lower Burma, and the Shan Highlands.

<sup>69</sup> According to the KBZ (I: 347), only two *sitkès* were assigned to the Shan States, while a *myowun* was sent by Hsinbyushin to each of the lowland provincial capitals of Burma proper. The appointment of *myowuns* to the Highlands might have been abolished, or at least not practiced, during his reign.

<sup>70</sup> The first *bo-hmu* was assigned to Monè by 1802 at the latest (GUBSS pt 2, vol. II: 424).

<sup>71</sup> According to the MMOK (IV: 111), *sitkè-daw-gyi* (great *sitkè*) ranked above ordinary *sitkès*.



*sawbwa* “was a subject of Ava and subordinate to the [Burmese] military chiefs” (497), while “the members of the tsoboa’s [*sawbwa*’s] family are frequently insulted in the streets [by the Burmese]” (500).

*Miscellaneous accounts*<sup>72</sup>

The *sittan* then begins to dwell at length on the territorial extent of the principality and the name of districts and townships under its jurisdiction.<sup>73</sup> What is interesting here is that Kyaing Taung (Keng Töng) is mentioned among the domains under the rule of Monè.<sup>74</sup> According to the ROB (VII: 58), Kyaing Taung, a dependency of Monè in the early 1760s, became an autonomous *myoza*-ship and then was promoted to *sawbwa*-ship sometime before or during the reign of Bodawhpaya (1782-1819); and further raised to senior *sawbwa*-ship in 1812 by that king as a reward for the service rendered by the Shan prince.<sup>75</sup> Konbaung Burma attempted to dissect the territory of major Shan principalities to set up new *myoza*- or *sawbwa*-ships, thereby reducing the military power of each domain and the solidarity of the entire Shan area now under many petty rulers whose status was solely dependent on the favor of the Konbaung monarch. As had been true of the other cases discussed above, however, this “divide and rule” policy too had its origin not in the Konbaung but in the Nyaungyan dynasty. This will be shown in due course.

Next the *sittan* tells of tributary gifts to the Avan monarch, ministers and other officials at the court, which were sent twice a year, on the New Year and End-of-Lent ceremonies, and additionally upon the ascension of a new *sawbwa* to the throne of Monè.<sup>76</sup> Far more generous presents that were in return conferred upon the *sawbwa* by the king on these occasions are also itemized.

The *sittan* then shows a list of the royal members and ministers of Monè, with their name, age, and the day of the week on which they were born.<sup>77</sup> According to the list, the *sawbwa*, Thohunbwa, was at the age of thirty-four, and Maha Midwei, his wife (only one is mentioned), was twenty-eight, blessed with a thirteen-year old son and a one-year old daughter. The ministers, four in total, were all aged men of sixty, fifty, sixty-five and fifty-four. Also mentioned is the “*sawbwa*’s *sayei*,” secretary, aged thirty-seven.

Next comes a fragmentary list of some interest and puzzlement, titled “*Monè-myo ein athi sayin* [List of household and non-service commoners in the town of Monè].”

<sup>72</sup> While some of the following accounts are crucial for the study of Burmese administration in the Shan States, others are not very relevant. In any case, I introduce the entire text as it may be of some interest to certain readers willing to venture upon a further exploration of this *sittan*.

<sup>73</sup> The *sittan* of 1668 (ROB I: 325) also includes a similar list, which I have compared with that of 1763. Many toponyms, for some reason, do not correspond to each other.

<sup>74</sup> Not to be confused with Keng Tung, a major Tai principality in the trans-Salween region.

<sup>75</sup> Kyaing Taung in the 1890s was recorded again as a dependency of Monè (GUBSS pt. II, vol. II: 368). Another promotion of a Shan domain to *sawbwa*-ship by the Burmese monarch is also observable in the case of Lègya (Laikha) (*Journal*: 505).

<sup>76</sup> The gifts to the king were more or less the same on each occasion, consisting of horse(s), a golden bowl and a roll of satin. LBHK (438, 470) also has detailed lists of the gifts, which are somewhat different from those in the *sittan*.

<sup>77</sup> The last information was, and is, important to the Burmese.

The number of households in the town of Monè in 1763 was 443.<sup>78</sup> Dr Richardson wrote in 1837 (*Journal*: 505) that Monè “may contain 1,600 houses, 300 or 320 of which are said to be inhabited by Burmans,”<sup>79</sup> while “in 1898 there were not less than eight hundred houses” (GUBSS pt. II, vol. II: 425).<sup>80</sup> What attributed to the variability in the figures is unknown.

The List then mentions Maing Pun (Mäng Pön), Maing Pan (Mäng Pan), and Kyaing Hkan (Keng Kham) as *tatpaungs* of Monè.<sup>81</sup> The *sittan* of 1668 (ROB I: 325-6) also has a reference to the three *tatpaungs*, and additionally Naungmun (Nöngmön), which is omitted in the *sittan* of 1763.<sup>82</sup> This indicates that Naungmun, the former *tatpaung* of Monè, became an independent charge sometime after 1668, most likely in the early 1670s, when Ava pacified Monè (see no. 3 above). Therefore, in the LBHK (61, 64, 92, 184), written by a minister who served at the Avan court in the first half of the 18th century, Naungmun is treated as a *myoza*-ship of its own.<sup>83</sup> Nyaungyan Burma attempted “divide and rule” in the Shan States to curb the power of major *sawbwa*-ships. As seen above, Konbaung successors adopted and applied this policy more widely to the Shan realm.

Lastly, the list features “*Athi ywa sayin* [List of non-service commoners’ villages],” which, due to the fragmentation, names only two villages. Both villages, named Kahi *ywa* and Lwele *ywa*, contain fourteen houses each. What is interesting and puzzling here is the use of the Burmese term “*athi*,” non-service commoners. According to Lieberman (1984: 106):

Unlike *ahmu-dans*, *athis* were rarely, if ever, exempt from agricultural produce taxes. Furthermore all *athis* were obliged to pay substantial household taxes. These could be in kind . . . or more commonly, in fixed cash amounts surrendered on a yearly or monthly basis to the Ministry of *Athi*.

Thus arises the question: Was the term *athi* in the text simply applied to a similar category of people in the Shan domain; or were the *athis* of Monè subjects of the Burmese monarch,<sup>84</sup> and obliged to pay their taxes to the Ministry of *Athi* in Ava, rather than to

<sup>78</sup> In monarchical Burma, an average house “was considered to contain between five and seven individuals” (BSTN: 400). Then, the population of the town in 1763 was between 2,200 and 3,100.

<sup>79</sup> He also states (499), “[Monè] may contain about 8,000 or 10,000 inhabitants; about 2,000 of these are Burmans.”

<sup>80</sup> GUBSS also remarks (425): “[Monè] town had suffered so much from the constant intestinal warfare of the Shan States and its constant violent change of rulers that . . . in May 1887 there were no more than seventeen houses.”

<sup>81</sup> A chief of the *tatpaung* was obliged to supply a force of a few hundred on request by the *sawbwa* (who was in turn ordered to provide a force by the Burmese monarch), to whom they were subordinate (MMOK IV: 111).

<sup>82</sup> The ROB spells Maing “Hun,” which must be a misprint for “Pun.”

<sup>83</sup> Later in the Konbaung period, the rest of the *tatpaungs*, Maing Pun, Maing Pan and Kyaing Hkan, seem to have become an autonomous *myoza*-ship (GUBB pt. II, vol. I: 357; vol. II: 456-7; *List* 11, #16: 8).

<sup>84</sup> There is another possibility that these *athis* were Burmese migrants or colonists, which, however,

the coffers of their lord? If the latter is the case, Nyaungyan Burma partially succeeded in directly administering and collecting tax from a group of settlements in the Shan territory, whose inhabitants were designated as *athi* by the Burmese monarch. A similar example can be found in the ROB (II: 32). The royal order of 1679 refers to the list of *athi taing* (district of *athis*) of Kale and other Shan domains in the upper Chindwin valley that were kept in the “Royal Archives.”<sup>85</sup> Nyaungyan monarchs might as well have retained *athi* estates in some of the Shan States and claimed authority over them, thereby encroaching upon the bases of the *sawbwas*’ human and economic resources.

## Conclusion

Surrounding the Dry Zone of Upper Burma in the northwest, north and east, the Shan Highlands always posed a grave threat to Burmese dynasties centered at the Irrawaddy Basin since the late 13th century. Twice, in 1364 and 1527, the Burmese capitals, Pinya/Sagaing and Ava respectively, fell to the northern Shan forces. As a result of the latter attack, a Shan power dominated, though temporarily, the political scene of Upper Burma. Finally and suddenly in the mid-16th century when Bayinnaung, the “Victor of the Ten Directions,” subdued the Highlands, was the entire Shan world reduced to a Burmese vassalage. The Burmese monarch did not interfere in the local affairs of each Shan domain as long as they were militarily nonthreatening, and tribute, with the occasional offering of a daughter to the king’s harem, was sent on a regular basis. This *laissez-faire* policy was also maintained by the succeeding Nyaungyan dynasty, founded by a son of Bayinnaung, and the political structure in the Highlands was left intact throughout the period. It was the next Konbaung dynasts who for the first time attempted administrative reorganization of the Shan States, as a result of which Burmese control over them was tightened and some of the major Shan principalities that lay closer to the dynastic center were “Burmanized,” directly administered by centrally-appointed governors.<sup>86</sup> This is a short summary of the conventional historiography of Burma-Shan relations.

The essential issue this article has addressed is that in this traditional historiography lies a crucial contradiction: the early Nyaungyan monarchs, while introducing various innovative administrative means to the lowland provincial centers of Burma proper, basically left intact their Toungoo predecessors’ *laissez-faire* policy toward the Shan Highlands; the Konbaung successors, though known for their politically conservative nature, implemented new patterns of control and achieved greater central supervision

is less likely.

<sup>85</sup> Actually, according to the original Burmese version of the order (ROB II: 199), while there was no (?) *athi taing*, some *kyeik-su taings* existed in Kale. *Kyeik-su* were “quasi-*athis*,” outsiders to the community who “agreed to share the tax and corvée burdens,” and who “were often allowed access to *athi* land” (Lieberman 1984: 105n). In any case, these *kyeik-su taings* apparently paid tax to the Nyaungyan monarch who ordered their list kept at the “Royal Archives.” As stated above (fn. 44), territorial integration of the upper Chindwin Shan domains including Kale into the Burmese state was already in progress in the 1640s. In the Konbaung *sittan*, the number of *athi* (not *kyeik-su*) households in Kale increased to 315 (BSTN: 402, 412).

<sup>86</sup> In Mogaung, Mohnyin, and Bhamo, *sawbwas* were replaced with *myowuns* in the early Konbaung period (cf. Leach 1997: 34; ROB IV: 170; VI: 60).

over the Shan States. The study of the Monè *sittan* has revealed that it was actually during the Nyaungyan period when the upland Shan domains underwent a significant administrative change and increasingly came under the authority of the Avan monarch, though not on a scale comparable to the lowland provincial capitals.

Having learnt crucial lessons from the collapse of the previous dynasty, which was mainly caused by a series of rebellions by *bayins*, quasi-sovereign sub-kings of provincial centers, the early Nyaungyan leaders replaced *bayins* with *myowuns*, court-appointed governors supported and monitored by other appointive personnel. Consequently, revolts by royal contenders to the throne were substantially reduced and the state became politically more integrated and thus stable. Parallel to this administrative development in the gubernatorial centers of the lowlands, also was the deployment of *wuns* and *sitkès* with other officials to Monè (and other Shan domains) initiated by Thalun in the 1630s. The appointment of a set of Burmese officials was the first major administrative step taken by the Burmese monarchy to integrate quasi-sovereign Shan vassals into the political orbit centered at the Dry Zone of Upper Burma. This represents the major change of Burmese policy from merely demanding annual tribute to closely monitoring the native administration through royal agents; it is a remarkable shift from the personalized to formalized and institutionalized nature of central control over its dependency on the periphery.

Combined with personal and ceremonial obligations—apprenticeship at the Avan court, rendering of regular homage, forwarding tribute, and gifts of women—Nyaungyan arrangements of the administrative structure of Shan principalities diminished the aura as well as prestige of *sawbwas*, and militarily and politically emasculated them. Once styled “Lord of Heaven,” *sawbwas* were now ordered in a status hierarchy, on the top of which stood the High King of Ava. A long-term trend toward political integration of the Shan world into the Burmese state was already under way in the first half of the 17th century.<sup>87</sup>

### Abbreviations

Ann-CMC	Ken Kirigaya. “Some Annotations to <i>The Chiang Mai Chronicle</i> .”
BSTN	Frank N. Trager and William J. Koenig. <i>Burmese Sit-tans 1764-1826: Records of Rural Life and Administration</i> .
GUBSS	J. George Scott and J.P. Hardiman. <i>Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States</i> .
HMN	<i>Hmannan Mahayazawindawgyi</i> .
Journal	Volker Grabowsky and Andrew Turton. <i>The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship: The McLeod and Richardson Diplomatic Missions to Tai States in 1837</i> .
KBZ	U Tin. <i>Konbaung-zet Mahayazawindawgyi</i> .
LBHK	Thiri Uzana. <i>Lawkabyahakyan</i> .

<sup>87</sup> As stated above, in addition to the administrative innovations, also were the creation of *athi* estates in the Shan realm and cannibalization of major Shan domains introduced by Nyaungyan monarchs, whereby the bases of the *sawbwas*’ human as well as economic resources were eroded.



<i>List</i>	<i>List of Microfilms Deposited in the Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies. Part 8. Burma.</i>
<i>List 11, #16</i>	<i>Thanlwin Ashei-anauk Myo-saung Sa-yin.</i>
<i>List 50, #2</i>	<i>Monè-myo Kawza 1125 hku Sittan.</i>
<i>List 80, #4</i>	<i>Thalun Min-taya Amein-daw.</i>
MMOS	U Tin. <i>Myanma-min ok-chok-pon sa-dan.</i>
ROB	Than Tun. <i>The Royal Orders of Burma.</i>
UK	U Kala. <i>Mahayazawingyi.</i>
YT	Twinthintaikwun Mahasitu. <i>Mahayazawinthat.</i>
ZOK	J. S. Furnivall and Pe Maung Tin. <i>Zambudipa ok-hsanug kyan.</i>

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# Narai's Daughter: Women and Ayutthaya's Court Intrigues

Bhawan Ruangsilp<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Princess Yothathep is one of very few royal women who make some mark in the history of Ayutthaya. She lived across four reigns as royal daughter, queen, and royal mother. In the Thai chronicles, the account of her is minimal. French and Dutch residents in Siam, however, were fascinated by her. Though they never saw her in person, they recorded fragments of information. Though the resulting record is fragmentary and fragile, it shows how the elite women of Ayutthaya suffered the limitations of their position and yet explored the possibilities of their access to wealth, knowledge, and power.

## Introduction: Kromluang Yothathep

Throughout its history, the Kingdom of Ayutthaya was plagued with succession conflicts, which were the logical consequence of the centrality of the kingship, the ruler being the lord of life and of land. The conflict was rife when either there were too many contenders for the throne, or an able heir was absent. The reign of King Narai (r. 1656–1688) was destined to descend into such a crisis, and the fate of his only daughter, Kromluang Yothathep was bound up with the result.

The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya provide rather limited information on Princess Yothathep. They give only an outline of her life: as a daughter of a king, a wife of a king, and a mother of a potential heir to the throne. These statuses are determined by her relationships with the men in her life. Interestingly, we can find more references about her, in sources by contemporary European observers, especially Dutch and French, who called her the “Princess Queen.”<sup>2</sup> From these sources, we have a picture of the limitations that a woman in her position in her time suffered, and of the possibilities which she could explore in order to access wealth, knowledge and power.

Ayutthaya's elite women were ascribed certain roles and spaces, but this did not mean that they were completely powerless and without influence. They could exercise political power in a certain way; this ability was based on their relations with and influence over powerful men. Kromluang Yothathep was no exception. Her power and

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to express her gratitude to Yanini Phaithayawat and Pimmanus Wibulsilp for their assistance at the early stage of writing this article.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Chaumont, “Relation of the Embassy,” 106.

potential to exercise that power lay in her status as a daughter, a wife, and a mother of important men. At the same time, these statuses made her significant in politics.

### The “Princess Queen”

Princess Sudavadi was the only legitimate child of King Narai. She was born between 1658 and 1660 to his queen Phra Krasattri, who was also his sister. At an unknown date, the monarch had his daughter elevated to the rank and title of Kromluang Yothathep, by which she is referred to in the Royal Chronicles. Probably around the same time the king appointed his other sister, Princess Srisuphan, as Kromluang Yothathip. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab explained that these appointments signaled the establishment of two new administrative (manpower-administrating) departments (*krom*).<sup>3</sup> The two princesses should be regarded as the first female royal commanders of such departments. The elevation of his sister and daughter to the commanding positions of the new *krom* had political motivation.

Narai's father, King Prasat Thong (r. 1629-1656), a former high-ranking official who usurped the throne, imposed strict controls on the nobility (*khun nang*). The legacy passed down to his son. King Narai was concerned over the question of how to control the *khun nang*. The establishment of the new *krom* was a means to place manpower and resources under the *chao* (royalty). At the same time, the king appointed a number of foreign officials who had expertise to offer but no base of power. These foreigners depended solely on the king's favour and were therefore unlikely to pose a serious threat.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that, while King Narai granted the high administrative rank of *kromluang* to his daughter Yothathep and his sister Yothathip, he did not do the same to his surviving brothers. Besides his sister-wife, these two ladies were the closest and most trusted allies of the king. Narai had a long record of power struggles against his male family members.

The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya reveal very little about Yothathep's life during her father's reign. The Western sources help throw light on her person. The French priest Nicolas Gervaise reported,

She is above average height and has a beautiful mouth, widely set black eyes and an usually white complexion. Her nose is a little too flat to be shapely, but there is in everything she does a certain something that is most engaging and agreeable.<sup>5</sup>

Such is the description of King Narai's only daughter, basing upon the information that Gervaise obtained from “those who saw her before she reached the age of fourteen years.” This is a very rare contemporary description, though not a direct eyewitness account, of how an elite woman of the Ayutthaya period looked. As Gervaise noted, after having reached that age, Siamese princesses could no longer be seen by any man

<sup>3</sup> Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Athibai wa duai yot chao*, 205.

<sup>4</sup> This is the main argument presented in Nidhi, *Kanmueang thai samai phra narai*, 46-53.

<sup>5</sup> Gervaise, *Natural and Political History*, 160.



including their own brothers. The exception was of course the king himself.

The Western observers paid attention to the functions and authority of Kromluang Yothathep. As a daughter of King Narai, especially as his only and most beloved child, the princess was granted the rights to govern some major cities and so profited from the rights to levy tax and recruit civilian and military manpower. As the French diplomat, De Choisy remarked: "she [*Yothathep*] has her own lands, revenues, subjects, soldiers, and officers, all independent of the King." He explained further that

[e]very day she holds audience, both morning and evening, with all the wives of the important mandarins, who would not dare be absent from either. She sits on her throne and all these poor women are prostrate on the floor, their heads bowed, in the same posture as their husbands before the King.<sup>6</sup>

His remark was confirmed by another French diplomat, Chevalier de Chaumont, who wrote:

This princess has her court consisting of mandarin's ladies, who see her every day; and she holds a council with her women about her own affairs. She distributes justice to those belonging to her about all her affairs. The king having given her provinces, she maintains her court with the revenue, and conducts her own justice.<sup>7</sup>

The king also gave full authority to his daughter in the matters of the inner palace and granted her a residence styled for a queen within the royal palace. Princess Yothathep succeeded her late mother as the person in charge of the palace affairs. She seemed to perform these tasks very well. Gervaise, was full of praise for her.

Her ability to please all the ladies who are permitted to see her is supported by a solidity of judgment and a liveliness of wit, of which a happy and well-balanced blending is not always the lot of persons of her sex. ... The king, who knows the good qualities of this princess better than anybody, decided three or four years ago to put them to the test. As she is the heir presumptive to his crown, one day he was pleased to place it on her head and for forty-eight hours to leave her in sole charge of the government of the kingdom. She exceeded all his expectations, for she reasoned on the most difficult affairs of state that the Council put before her as if she had been trained for this her whole life, and her natural perceptiveness made up for her lack of experience so well that it was evident she had been born for the throne and that she would know very well how to occupy it when she was called to ascend it.<sup>8</sup>

His observation was supported by Father Guy Tachard, who found the princess to

<sup>6</sup> Choisy, *Journal of a Voyage*, 176.

<sup>7</sup> Chaumont, "Relation of the Embassy," 106.

<sup>8</sup> Gervaise, *Natural and Political History*, 160.

be “witty and active, and in the government of the provinces which the King hath given her, shows a great deal of wisdom and moderation.”<sup>9</sup>

It was her direct responsibility to govern the inner palace staff under her authority and judicial power. They basically consisted of court ladies, female servants, and eunuchs. Gervaise emphasized that the princess was very severe in discipline.

There is only one thing for which she can be justly reproached and that is that her virtuousness is a little too austere; she has been known to have the heads of her ladies of honour shaved in her presence for the slightest faults and simply for scandal-mongering against their companions, and by this punishment dishonoured them for the rest of their lives.<sup>10</sup>

Chaumont heard that when her women had been proved guilty of great slanders, or of revealing secrets of great importance, the princess had had their mouths sewn up. When a maid-of-honor berated her colleague, the princess had her head shaved to shame her.<sup>11</sup> De Choisy wrote that Constantin Phaulkon informed him of Yothathep’s severity: “When some lady has spoken too much, she has her mouth sewn up, and when she has not spoken enough, her mouth is slit from ear to ear.”

However, it should be noted that such severe punishments were within the power of a king’s daughter under the law of the palace.<sup>12</sup> As de Choisy stated, this kind of punishment was not often carried out.<sup>13</sup> Chaumont added that after the death of her mother, she behaved with much more gentleness.<sup>14</sup>

It may appear that the court women of Ayutthaya were confined within the inner palace. In fact they moved beyond the palace but only to serve the king when he relocated to places outside the capital. Apart from her main duties including the organization of ceremonies and festivities within the palace, Princess Yothathep was responsible for organizing and facilitating the royal relocation. When King Narai was to travel to Lopburi, where he had a residence, his daughter would travel in advance to arrange the welcome reception. She of course had to travel without allowing anyone to see her. She was also reported to have accompanied her father on a hunting trip. On such occasions, her presence was known to all, and required appropriate behavior.

She traveled in a very fine chair placed on an elephant. ... There are horsemen who march before her to clear the way, and if there be anyone in the road that cannot soon get out, he prostrates himself on the ground and turns his back towards her.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Tachard, *Voyage to Siam*, 230.

<sup>10</sup> Gervaise, *Natural and Political History*, 160.

<sup>11</sup> Chaumont, “Relation of the Embassy,” 106.

<sup>12</sup> Such severe punishments for disobeying a royal order appear in the Palace Law (*Kot Monthianban*). See *Kot monthianban chabap chaloemphrakiat*, 129; Baker and Pasuk, *Ayutthaya Palace Law*, 102.

<sup>13</sup> Choisy, *Journal of a Voyage*, 176.

<sup>14</sup> Chaumont, “Relation of the Embassy,” 106-7.

<sup>15</sup> Chaumont, “Relation of the Embassy,” 107.

The relations between elite women and the outside world were limited but possible. Elite women of the Ayutthayan court had found ways to reach out beyond the palace walls. Lines of communication were established between the princesses, court ladies, wives of officials, and outsiders in order to facilitate trading activities or the exercise of influence outside the palace. An excellent example is the case of Osoet in the previous reign of King Prasat Thong. This female Mon trader liaised with officials' wives and court ladies on behalf of the Dutch East India Company (VOC).<sup>16</sup>

Among Ayutthaya's court women, however, Princess Yothathep was a special case on account of the fact that she was the daughter of King Narai and had especially close relationship with him.

Chaumont shows that she ate in the same place and at the same time as her father, but at a separate table.<sup>17</sup> De Choisy reported that she visited her father and had meals with him twice a day. His informant, Phaulkon, often had to interrupt these meals to discuss urgent matters with the king in her presence. De Choisy noted, "The Princess was at table with a small screen in front of her, and he did not see her".<sup>18</sup>

The royal court of Ayutthaya had long been exposed to the outside world in various ways. They were familiar with imported goods such as Indian textiles, Chinese porcelain, and Japanese lacquerware. There were Chinese and Muslim eunuchs serving in the inner palace. The court regularly received incoming diplomatic missions and sent out embassies. The capital city, which served as an international port as well, was visited by many foreigners. The court members, including the members of the inner palace, must have been aware of the world's geography and cultural diversities to a certain extent.

During Narai's reign, however, more people, ideas, and material arrived than ever before. King Narai was known for his enthusiasm for things foreign. His court had in possession books on the history of the French dynasty and Louis XIV's portrait. The royal orders submitted to the VOC included the following: eyeglasses, trees and birds from Java, ostriches from the Cape of Good Hope, European styled hats, mirror and glassware, marble statues and fountain bowl from Coromandel, cheese and ham, wine and vinegar. Also introduced to the court were telescopes, astronomical devices, clocks, sandglasses for measuring time, and Western compasses. During the reign of King Narai, the Europeans arriving at Ayutthaya included a hat maker, pyro-technician, carpenter, stone carver, doctor, and engineer.<sup>19</sup> These people and objects offer a glimpse of King Narai's world, a world that he allowed his daughter to be part of. She was allowed to enjoy the foreign material and ideas in his life.

In place of her late mother, Princess Yothathep took charge not only of palace affairs but also exchanging gifts with foreign diplomatic counterparts of her father. In the 1686–7, King Narai sent presents to King Louis XIV and the Dauphin of France with the return embassy. At the same time, the Princess Queen sent her own presents, which mainly consisted of Japanese stuffs, to Madame la Dauphine (Marie-Anne Christine of

<sup>16</sup> The case of Osoet is studied in Dhiravat, "VOC Employees and their Relationships with Mon and Siamese Women."

<sup>17</sup> Chaumont, "Relation of the Embassy," 106.

<sup>18</sup> Choisy, *Journal of a Voyage*, 176.

<sup>19</sup> Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, 140-3.

Bavaria) and the Duke of Burgundy, the eldest son of the Dauphin.<sup>20</sup>

Apart from the wealth she received from her father and the tax and manpower under her control, Yothathep was involved with foreign trade. According to La Loubère, the princess was competing with her own father in foreign trade.

She has her Magazine, her ships, and her Treasures. She exercises Commerce; and when we arrived in this Country, the Princess, whom I have reported to be treated like a Queen, was exceedingly embroiled with the King her Father, because that he reserved to himself alone almost all the Foreign Trade, and that thereby she found herself deprived thereof, contrary to the ancient Custom of the Kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

### The political bride

King Narai had a history of distrusting his male relatives. In order to come to the throne, he eliminated his older brother and his uncle, and he killed two rebellious younger brothers to maintain it. That may explain why he placed no trust upon the two surviving brothers, Chaofa Aphaithot and Chaofa Noi. In particular, the deformed and bad-tempered Chaofa Aphaithot had misbehaved towards the king and even been accused of an act of treason against the king. The king was likely to feel more comfortable among his womenfolk, which included his sisters and his only daughter and legitimate child.

No Thai source is available on the rules of succession of Ayutthaya. Different contemporary European observers had different information on this issue. Cornelis van Nijenrode, who served as VOC trade director in Siam in the 1610s and 1620s, wrote that the king's eldest son had the pre-eminent right to succeed over all other candidates, providing that he was older than fifteen years. If this prince was younger, the king's eldest surviving brother would succeed to the throne. Joost Schouten and Jeremias van Vliet gave a different opinion. They wrote that the king's eldest surviving brother always had the right of succession.<sup>22</sup> La Loubère wrote that the eldest son of the queen was meant to succeed by law but "it frequently happens that amongst Brethren, tho' they be not all Sons of the Queen, and that amongst Uncles and Nephews, the most advanced in Age is preferred, or rather it is Force which always decides it."<sup>23</sup>

The French observers in Siam during Narai's reign clearly realized the potential problem of succession. They emphasized that it was impossible for a favorite child to succeed if that child was female. In La Loubère's words, "Daughters succeed not to the Crown, they are hardly look'd upon as free."<sup>24</sup> On the specific case of Narai and Yothathep, Vollant wrote:

The king had no other children than but one princess, to whom the right to reign

<sup>20</sup> The list of gifts was recorded by Chaumont, "Relation of the Embassy," 137-49.

<sup>21</sup> La Loubère, *New Historical Relation*, 101.

<sup>22</sup> Nijenrode, "Remonstrantie," 189; Schouten, "Description of Siam," 100; Van Vliet, "Historical Account," 259.

<sup>23</sup> La Loubère, *New Historical Relation*, 101.

<sup>24</sup> La Loubère, *New Historical Relation*, 101.



did not immediately fall, because according to the custom of the country the king's brothers succeed to the crown in preference to his children, to whom it nevertheless comes after the death of their uncles.<sup>25</sup>

Because Narai had no able male heir, the choice of a marriage partner for his only daughter and legitimate child had political implications. Contemporary European observers predicted that her husband would succeed to the throne. Various of these observers mentioned different potential spouses.

De Bèze suggested that King Narai had earlier been willing to marry Yothathep to his youngest brother. Prince Noi, who "in fact possessed every claim to the people's affection," was a contender as he was in favor with the king, popular among the people, good-looking, and gracious. The French priest claimed that the princess was fond of him.<sup>26</sup> Desfarges also reported the "common rumour" that the princess was to be secretly married to the younger prince.<sup>27</sup> However, Prince Noi's chances were dashed when he was caught in an affair with one of the king's consort.

Prince Noi's downfall was a curious incident. The consort happened to be a sister of Phra Phetracha, a high-ranking official at Narai's court. She was voluptuous and scandalous. One story told that she inflicted a wound on her own leg to serve as an excuse for leaving the inner palace to visit a French doctor who worked for the VOC and the royal court, and that this doctor helped her keep the wound fresh, while in truth she went to see Portuguese soldiers. This story became the talk of the town and a subject for satirical verses circulating among the people. Eventually, King Narai became suspicious. He ordered the palace doctors to heal the wound and confined this consort to the inner palace. She then turned to seducing the handsome Prince Noi and had some success.<sup>28</sup>

Phetracha's family members were the subjects of gossip in contemporary historical accounts. The Dutch reported that his son, Luang Sorasak, later King Sua, mistreated young women sadistically. Parents of some young women living around the company lodge in Ayutthaya made a plea to the Dutch to save their daughters, but in vain.<sup>29</sup> On another occasion, during the tonsure ceremony of a son of King Phetracha, a nineteen-year-old daughter of Luang Sorasak was exposed for sneaking out of the palace, disguised as a man, in order to have intercourse with low-class men.<sup>30</sup> Phra Phetracha did not protest against the death sentence for his sister for adultery and did not ask for clemency from the king. De Bèze relates that she was executed by tigers.<sup>31</sup>

The errant Prince Noi was condemned to be whipped by Phra Phetracha and Phra Pi. He was so severely punished that he became crippled and no longer spoke—interpreted

<sup>25</sup> Vollant in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 117.

<sup>26</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 53-4.

<sup>27</sup> Desfarges in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 54-6.

<sup>29</sup> VOC 1580, Missive Van Son to Batavia, 27 Nov. 1696, fo. 204. Thai chronicles also mention this preference of King Sua. See Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 391.

<sup>30</sup> VOC 1609, Dagregister Boom, 4 Dec. 1697, fo. 4.

<sup>31</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 56.

by some as a means to avoid any further suspicion. According to De Bèze, King Narai did not wish his daughter to marry Prince Noi anymore. In effect, this incident was a political assassination to get rid of a potential spouse of the princess and a potential heir to the throne.

According to De Bèze, the King now wished his daughter to marry his adopted son, Phra Pi, who was “ever at the King’s side.”<sup>32</sup> However, the princess did not agree either because she was still emotionally attached to Prince Noi or because she disapproved of Phra Pi because of his lowly origin. This upset her father considerably.<sup>33</sup>

Yothathep also came into conflict with another favorite of King Narai, Constantin Phaulkon. Earlier, Yothathep had tried to get Phaulkon’s support by granting one of her ladies-in-waiting as his wife, and had asked him to care of this lady well in order to show his loyalty to herself. But Phaulkon married Marie de Guimar and sent this lady-in-waiting to reside in Phitsanulok against the princess’s will.<sup>34</sup> In 1684, Phaulkon sent 2,000 men from her domains in an army despatched to Cambodia. She raised a storm and for a long time would not listen to the reasons which Phaulkon’s wife, Madame Constance, gave her to excuse her husband.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Desfarges reported that Princess Yothathep, who was “much attached to the country’s religion and to the customs of her ancestors,” considered Phaulkon to be the reason why King Narai was drifting away from this tradition.<sup>36</sup> Towards the end of the reign, it seems that the Princess and her father were growing apart. Either she withdrew herself from the Lopburi court where her father resided, or she was banished by him.<sup>37</sup>

### The survivor of the 1688 revolution

In 1688, another political crisis in Ayutthaya history was looming when King Narai was terminally ill and the succession became an urgent matter. This political turmoil known to Western observers as the 1688 Revolution in Siam would bring an end to Narai’s line of succession and pave the way for the rise of the Ban Phu Luang Dynasty. Detailed accounts of the Revolution and its immediate aftermath, especially the expulsion of the French, have been compiled by other scholars using Thai, French, and Dutch sources.<sup>38</sup> Here I will concentrate on the role of Kromluang Yothathep.

As the health of King Narai deteriorated, different factions at court maneuvered for advantage. On one side, the alliance of Phaulkon and Phra Pi counted on French backing. On the other, Phra Phetracha and Luang Sorasak gained support from those who were anti-French and anti-Christian. The royal ladies became embroiled in this political struggle.

<sup>32</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 53.

<sup>33</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 56-8.

<sup>34</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Choisy, *Journal of a Voyage*, 177.

<sup>36</sup> Desfarges in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 22.

<sup>37</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 58.

<sup>38</sup> Dhiravat, “Political History of Siam under the Prasatthong Dynasty,” 405-53; Cruysse, *Siam and the West*, 427-67.

For the competing factions, the most pressing question was who would succeed the King. Phaulkon tried to influence the monarch's decision. According to the contemporaneous Dutch account, attributed to VOC trade director in Ayutthaya, Johannes Keijts<sup>39</sup>, however, Phaulkon found that the king was closely guarded by Phetracha's people. Phaulkon managed to sneak into the palace to tell the king that Phetracha was planning to seize power and to press him to announce that Yothathep was appointed as queen and that the royal brother whom she chose to marry would succeed him as king.<sup>40</sup> French sources also suggest that the uncle she were to marry would succeed the king.<sup>41</sup>

The head of the VOC factory in Ayutthaya, Johannes Keijts believed that King Narai was opposed to Phetracha's seizure of power. He reported that, before his death, the King had given the "royal scepter," the symbol of the right to rule, to his only daughter, "perhaps in order to show that he did not accept that the Crown was taken by the person who now wears it [Phetracha], or to create another party powerful enough to oppose him."<sup>42</sup>

While the Royal Chronicles are completely silent on the role of Princess Yothathep during the 1688 crisis, European observers give different information. Some accounts state that Phetracha had the princess locked up.<sup>43</sup> An English account claimed that the French reported she had been executed by wooden club and her body thrown into the river.<sup>44</sup> Another account suggested that she embraced Phetracha's anti-French cause:

The princess queen ... who was in the palace when Phaulkon was detained and Pra Pi was killed, proclaimed loudly that all the Christians in the kingdom should be exterminated. Indeed, they were all seized and covered with chains.<sup>45</sup>

Having violently and successfully eliminated the Phaulkon-Phra Pi faction and expelled the French from Siam, Phetracha turned his attention to Narai's family members. The problem was how to persuade the princes and princesses who resided in Ayutthaya to come to Lopburi. Desfarges reported as follows:

<sup>39</sup> The original report is in VOC 1444, *Beknopt verhaal van de wonderlyke verandering voorgevallen in het koninkryke Siam desen jare 1688* [Concise story of the astounding change occurred in the Kingdom of Siam this year 1688], 30 Nov. 1688, fos. 1639-1651. Based on a French version, the English translation 'Succinct Account of What Occurred in the Kingdom of Siam in the Year 1688' by an anonymous author appears in Smithies, *Witnesses to a Revolution*. All references are to this printed edition.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous, "Succinct Account 1688," 13-4.

<sup>41</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 86; Anonymous, "Relation of the Principal Circumstances," 13.

<sup>42</sup> VOC 1453, Missive Keijts to Batavia, 5 Dec. 1688, fo. 247<sup>v</sup>. See also Anonymous, "Relation of the Principal Circumstances," esp. 13. This author claimed that King Narai declared his daughter Queen, and whichever uncle she were to marry would succeed him.

<sup>43</sup> De Bèze, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, 111; Saint-Vandrilie, "The Revolution in Siam," 45.

<sup>44</sup> "A full and true relation of the great and wonderful revolution that happened lately in the kingdom of Siam in the East-Indies," in Farrington and Dhiravat, *English Factory in Siam*, vol. 2, 1343-5.

<sup>45</sup> Beauchamp, "Account of the Revolutions at the Court of Siam," 64.

The princes hesitated to go to Lavo, not for any mistrust they then felt for Phetracha but because they considered themselves in command of the city of Siam, and were less sure of their position in Louvo, where Prapie and Constance stayed, whom they feared would be the problem „, this made them much more inclined to make their public entrance into the palace in Ayutthaya, there to proclaim the younger prince [Prince Noi] king, and then to require the mandarins who were in Louvo to come and pay homage. This course was much preferred by the princess [Yothathep], who was or was destined to be his wife. But they could not resist the pressing requests of a man whom they considered the most faithful, just, and disinterested in the kingdom.<sup>46</sup>

Desfarges added that Phetracha pacified the royals by sending a grand and impressive escort for their journey from Ayutthaya to Lopburi and by receiving them with every all possible sign of submission. Phetracha also had another trick for gaining the trust of the princes and princesses.

[H]e resolved to utilize the hatred of us [the French] he had ignited in the minds of the princes, the mandarins, and the populace, ... giving them to understand that the kingdom would never be at peace but that we [the French] were destroyed. We were told that the princess was the first to enter into this plan, which she greatly regretted subsequently.<sup>47</sup>

Once Phetracha had Narai's daughter under his control, he ordered the execution of the royal brothers. The king was so struck by grief at the news of their death that he became incapable of taking action, was unable to speak, and died of dropsy two days later on 11 July 1688, having reigned for 31 years and 8 months. He left his only daughter most disconsolate. According to one European account, he handed her the royal sword shortly before his death, but it was unknown what he intended or what he told her.<sup>48</sup>

As a way to establish his legitimacy, the newly crowned King Phetracha married both Kromluang Yothathep and Kromluang Yothathip. Marrying the women of a predecessor was a conventional way for a usurper in Ayutthaya history to legitimate his rule. The Europeans understood that this was done “to make his reign more assured, and to remove any pretext for unrest.”<sup>49</sup> Yothathip was appointed the primary queen of the right side, and Yothathep the primary queen of the left, while the earlier wife of Phetracha became the primary queen of the center.<sup>50</sup>

The marriage between Phetracha in his fifties and Yothathep in her twenties seemed to be the talk of the town among both Thai and foreigners. A Dutch record reported the

<sup>46</sup> Desfarges in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 30.

<sup>47</sup> Desfarges in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 34-5.

<sup>48</sup> Anonymous, “Succinct Account 1688,” 131-2.

<sup>49</sup> Vollant in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 147.

<sup>50</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 337.



rumor that this marriage upset Phetracha's existing wife.<sup>51</sup> Desfarges wrote that it had been thought that Phetracha would marry Yothathep to his son but he preferred to take her for himself. The Princess's reactions were described as:

It is said that the princess was extremely grieved from the death of the person who should have been her husband, and in her fury she showed no restraint in respect of the author of her tribulations, and greatly repented of having been so anti-French; but in the end she preferred to live as a queen than to die unhappy.<sup>52</sup>

The Thai chronicles report how Yothathip and Yothathep behaved when King Phetracha tried to get intimate with them for the first time.

His Majesty [King Phetracha] thereupon advanced in holy royal procession and would have entered the sleeping quarters of the holy residential mansion of Princess of the Third Rank Yotha Thip. Princess of the Third Rank Yotha Thip reported on Her holy condition, saying she was ill with a holy disease. Thereupon His Majesty advanced in holy royal procession to the front of the holy residential mansion of Princess of the Third Rank Yotha Thep. Princess of the Third Rank Yotha Thep would not consent and uttered cutting insults. After she had spoken, she seized a sword weapon and held it in her holy hand. The King thereupon manifested His holy compassion by having an expert in making love philters summoned. His Majesty accordingly entered her holy sleeping quarters and made her weep. Thereupon, when His Majesty went [there] in holy royal procession on a later occasion, she consented.<sup>53</sup>

We cannot know whether Yothathep's consent was a result of the "love philters" or her recognition of the reality she was facing in the new reign.

### The queen without a crown

The accounts of Yothathep and Yothathip during the reign of King Phetracha as related in the Royal Chronicles are questionable in terms of accuracy. The Royal Chronicles mention both queens only in their role as mothers. They relate that Yothathep gave birth to Prince Trat Noi, meaning Little Speech,<sup>54</sup> and that Yothathip gave birth to a son called Phra Khwan, who was greatly respected by many as he was the royal nephew of King Narai.<sup>55</sup>

When King Phetracha fell terminally ill in 1703, Luang Sorasak and his sons took the opportunity to brutally eliminate his father's teenage son as a potential rival, but the chronicles disagree on *which* son. Some suggest that it was Trat Noi who was murdered,

<sup>51</sup> VOC 1453, Missive Keijts to Batavia, 5 Dec. 1688, fo. 250<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Desfarges in Smithies, *Three Military Accounts*, 47.

<sup>53</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 323.

<sup>54</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 355.

<sup>55</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 347.

while others say it was Phra Khwan.<sup>56</sup> Saddened by this death and enraged by the brutal act of Sorasak, the ailing Phra Phetracha announced that he would not give any royal wealth to Sorasak and his sons, and declared Phra Phichai Surin as his successor, but this order had no effect. The chronicles relate that Prince Sorasak took up the throne by invitation from “all the holy clerics royal, holy royal abbots, fearless chiefs, counselors, marshals, ministers, royal poets, domestic chaplains and astrology preceptors in great numbers.”<sup>57</sup> According to one chronicle, after Phetracha’s death, Yothathip, Yothathep and Prince Trat Noi decided to ask the new King Sua (formerly Luang Sorasak) for permission to withdraw from the royal court. They moved to a residence near Wat Phutthaisawan.<sup>58</sup> Elsewhere in the chronicles, Trat Noi was described as being “endowed with a holy intelligence of enormous capacity” and becoming monk, and was mentioned again during the reign of King Borommakot.<sup>59</sup>

In contrast to the chronicles, Dutch sources show Queen Yothathep taking an active role in politics. Although she had married the usurper unwillingly, her new status as a queen helped her maintain her power and privileges. Her position was further strengthened when she gave birth to a son because this son’s lineage as a grandson of King Narai consolidated King Phetracha’s legitimacy to rule.

A Dutch record from January 1703 written by the VOC trade director Gideon Tant describes Siam as ruled by a “three-headed government.” Besides King Phetracha, the two other power poles were Sorasak, on the one hand, and Queen Yothathep on behalf of her son, Phra Khwan, on the other hand. Both held their own courts, collected taxes, and had to be obeyed and, moreover, both negotiated separately in matters of trade. In short they seemed to be at liberty to actively promote the pursuit of their own courses.<sup>60</sup>

There was a more particular reason for Yothathep’s influence. As Narai’s daughter, Yothathep had a strong connection with officials who had served her father and were now serving her husband. Among her closest allies was Kosa Pan, who had been King Narai’s ambassador to France and was now the Phrakhlang minister of King Phetracha.

Throughout his reign, King Phetracha had to face challenges to his rule from inside and outside. The threats came in various forms: a rebel who claimed to be Narai’s brother; rejection from the vassal states; and suspicious undercurrents among officials from the previous reign. Between 1699 and 1703, the political crisis unfolded and led to another purge at the end of his reign.<sup>61</sup>

At the beginning of the reign, he tried to win over the high-ranking officials with positions and money. Once his power was consolidated, he reacted brutally against anyone who he considered suspicious. Phetracha started to eliminate Narai’s former officials, starting by purging the Phrakhlang minister, Kosa Pan. As a result of torture and hardship in incarceration, Kosa Pan died in November 1699. The whole royal court

<sup>56</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 367, 374.

<sup>57</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 368.

<sup>58</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 382-3.

<sup>59</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 382-3, 427.

<sup>60</sup> VOC 1676, Missive Tant to Batavia, 29 Jan. 1703, fos. 58-9.

<sup>61</sup> For the background and details of the political crisis at the end of King Phetracha’s reign, see Dhiravat, “Dutch and French Evidence Concerning Court Conflicts.”

was plunged into confusion and despair.<sup>62</sup> As Yothathep lost her important allies, like Kosa Pan, King Phetracha began to treat her badly, even beating her up.<sup>63</sup>

Yothathep's position was severely undermined in 1699-1700 when she was accused of masterminding the rebellion in Nakhon Ratchasima. This incident was rumored to be an attempt to replace King Phetracha with Phra Khwan.<sup>64</sup>

Once Phetracha became terminally ill, Yothathep immediately recruited support for her son's succession, including a favorite Chinese official of the king, Okya Sombatthiban. But Prince Sorasak outwitted them by taking control of the royal palace with his men, thereby controlling access to the dying king, and by replacing Okya Sombatthiban with his own supporter.

The Thai chronicles suggest there was a contest over legitimacy between Luang Sorasak and Princess Yothathep. Some editions claim that Sorasak was a secret love child of King Narai, rather than the son of Phra Phetracha. According to this story, as Narai was fearful of threats from male kin, he forced all his consorts to abort, but one child was born to a consort named Kusawadi, and then entrusted to Phra Phetracha. The truth of the story is moot. No foreign sources confirm it. Whereas Luang Sorasak or King Sua is prominent in the Royal Chronicles, Kromluang Yothathep is scarcely mentioned.

After Phetracha's death in February 1703, Sorasak asked former Queen Yothathip to crown him to rule as King Sua (1703-1709) until the teenage Phra Khwan came of age. At that time, Yothathip had retired to a convent life but she was respected by King Sua for having raised him. At first he treated Phra Khwan with care, but was just waiting for the right moment. The VOC's Tant was told by Siamese informers that Yothathep and her followers intended to assassinate the king, but the plot was betrayed by a lady in waiting who wanted to revenge herself on Queen Yothathep for having punished her for lying. King Sua was the first to make a move. He lured his young brother Phra Khwan into a trap and had him killed.

Upon hearing of her son's death, Yothathep sought refuge with her aunt Yothathip. According to the story that the Dutch heard from their Siamese source, Yothathip reminded her niece that the loss of the son was a result of her own past wrongdoings, her compromise with Phetracha which caused the death of her two uncles. Yothathip asked King Sua to spare her niece's life, but all her privileges were revoked and she was banished from the royal palace.<sup>65</sup> She moved to a small residence near Wat Phutthaisawan.

<sup>62</sup> VOC 1623, Missive Tant to Batavia, 25 Dec. 1699, fos. 39-40, 56.

<sup>63</sup> VOC 1637, Missive Tant to Batavia, 17 Jan. 1700, fo. 12.

<sup>64</sup> For more detail of the Nakhon Ratchasima and other turmoils in 1699-1700 see, Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, 169-172.

<sup>65</sup> VOC trade director Arnout Cleur documented the political struggle around the death of King Phetracha and its aftermath in his 'Relation of What Occurred upon the Sickness and Death of the Siamese King Named Phra Trong Than [Phetracha]', which is based on a story told by an unnamed courtier. VOC 1691, Relas van 't voorgevallene by de ziekte en overlyden van den Siamse koning Phra Trong Than genaamt [Relation of What Occurred upon the Sickness and Death of the Siamese King Named Phra Trong Than], (1703 or 1704), fos. 61-74. See also Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, 173-6.

With the destruction of the old official families that his father had begun, the murder of Phra Khwan and the degradation of Queen Yothathep, King Sua managed to end any possible challenge from Narai's dynasty.

### Kromluang Yothathep: a woman in Ayutthaya's politics

Yothathep died early in the reign of King Thaisa (r. 1709–33) and was given a royal funeral, the first recorded for a royal woman recorded in the Royal Chronicles. The funeral procession had “musical instruments, conch shell trumpets, gongs and drums,” and the remains from the cremation were installed in the *wihan* of the royal Wat Phra Si Sanphet.<sup>66</sup> Yothathep lived much longer, dying in 1736 in the early years of the reign of King Borommakot (1733–58). The Royal Chronicles record that king gave orders “to make a holy *meru* tower of small size, five *wa* and two *sòk* wide” (about 11 meters), but make no mention of a procession or the enshrining of the remains.<sup>67</sup>

The Thai chronicles offer only an outline of the life of Yothathep: as a king's daughter, another king's wife, and a potential king's mother. She is seen only in relation to the royal men. Without the contemporary European sources used here, we would have no picture of her life and world

The story of Kromluang Yothathep suggests the main role of elite women in Ayutthaya's politics was to convey some extra legitimacy to the royal men with whom they were connected. In some cases, however, these women could exercise influence over these men, or through these men. They, too, understood themselves as the protectors of their family and their faith. They, too, had their own interests.

Yothathep's own behavior was shaped and determined by her class rather than her gender. She ruled her realm of the inner palace with legitimate severity and not with motherly love. She took a share of foreign trade; commercial opportunities were distributed through personal connections, within the family, and not restricted to the males. Yothathep maintained alliances with the nobles who had served her father. The spatial segregation, which confined elite women within the inner palace, did not completely prevent her from reaching out to the outside world. The tradition of succession did not allow a woman to rule, but Yothathep bid for power on her son's behalf. She behaved like any other player in the politics of power, regardless of gender.

There is not much space for women in the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya, and not much either in the historiography of the Ayutthaya period. The Chronicles focus closely on the activities of the ruling elite, most of whom are men. Only a small handful of women disrupt this picture. Such women appear when their actions serve the purposes of their husband or nation, or when they threaten those same purposes. Queen Suriyothai and Queen Sri Sudachan are presented in the chronicles' historiography as binary opposites in this respect, a heroine versus a villainess, a dedicated wife and mother versus a treacherous consort and filicide.

Although the European sources fall far short of giving us a full, human picture

<sup>66</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 407.

<sup>67</sup> Cushman, *Royal Chronicles*, 432.



of Kromluang Yothathep, they move somewhat beyond the one-dimensional image in the chronicles, and shift the meaning of her life. She appears as a woman who is imprisoned by the very narrow space allowed to elite women of the era, yet as someone who exploited her privileges to play more of a role than most of her colleagues. Her ability to survive through a period of repeated purges, and to continue to wield influence against the background of rapid shifts in political fortunes, is undoubtedly due in large part to her association with King Narai, but must in part be accredited to her strength of character. As Gervaise reported at second hand, "there is in everything she does a certain something that is most engaging and agreeable."

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## On Lovemaking

Prince Thammathibet  
translated by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit

Prince Thammathibet (Chaofa Kung, Krom Sena Phithak), eldest son of King Borommakot, was among the most famous poets of the 18th century. In one cycle of poems, he adopted and adapted part of the folk culture of ordinary people—the songs sung by boatmen in the rhythm of rowing. By abandoning the complexities of court verse, these short verses achieved a spectacular and affecting realism. The shortest of these, once omitted from collections of his work, is *Bot he sangwat*, “On Lovemaking.”

Each segment is labelled with a different rhythm. The first is *khlong*, a poetic meter, here best read as an intimate murmur. The second is *chalawa he*, a slow chant when the boat leaves its mooring, best read in long sighs. The third is *mulawa he*, a fast chant when the boat is midstream, best read with some energy.

### บทเห่ลึงวาส

โคลง

๑ พี่ชมพี่เซยแล้ว  
เจ้ามิอ้ออำความ  
เจ้าเอื่อนมิเออขาม  
ผินพักตรมาอย่าข้อง

พलगาม

ไปพร้อง  
เขินพี่ อยู่ฤา  
ขัดแค้นเคื่องเลย ฯ

Now I’ve enjoyed you, I enquire,  
but you murmur no sound, not a word.  
Are you mute from fear, or shy of me?  
Turn your face here. Don’t fret or feel afraid.

ข้าลวะเห่

๑ พี่ชมพี่เซยพलग  
เจ้าเอื่อนอายพี่ฤา  
๑ พิศวงทรงรวรรูป  
จุดชักสไบบาง  
๑ พิศรูปก็น่ารัก  
อ้อนแอ้นอรเอวกลม  
๑ ใครเห็นเป็นขวัญเนตร  
มาदनุสสุดเสมอกาย

พี่ถามนางเจ้าไม้อ้อ

พี่ขอถามความจริงนาง  
พलगกอดจูบคอบคาง  
พलगคลึงเกล้าเฝ้ายวนสม  
พิศพักตรก็น่าชม  
ชมขวัญน้องต้องตามชาย  
ลืมหุ่กซ์เทวษเจตน์จงหมาย  
บ่วายรักลักนาที่ ฯ

Now I've enjoyed you, I enquire, but you murmur no sound.  
 Are you shy of me? I beg you, tell me the truth.  
 Dazzled by your beauty, I clasp, kiss, stroke your neck and chin,  
 pluck your thin breastcloth, ply you with pleasing caresses.  
 Seeing a figure so loveable, a face so alluring,  
 a slender waist so elegant, a spirit so appealing to a man,  
 anyone given such a gift for the eye, forgets all their sorrows,  
 desires a maiden's perfect body, cannot forego love for one minute.

มูละเห

๐ โหยหวนครวญไคร่ นาง

นั่งนอนหอนถามี

๐ คิดเคยเซยชมน้อง

เป็นสุขทุกเวลา

๐ ออกเอยเคยสังวาส

นับเดือนเลื่อนปีจร

๐ พุ่มพวงดวงดอกฟ้า

โฉมงามทรามเสี้ยว

อกเพียงพ่างล้างซีวี

สิ่งซึ่งสุขทุกเวลา

ไม่ห่างห้องสองเสนหา

มาจากได้ให้อาวรณ์

กรรมบาราศคลาคลาสมร

หอนเห็นแล้วแก้วตาเรียม

ในได้หล้าหาไหนเทียม

เรียมรักเจ้าเท่าดวงใจ ฯ

Yearning, pining, longing for you, enough to die of a broken heart,  
 I cannot sit, cannot sleep, nothing gives me joy, not ever.  
 I think of caressing you, close, a couple, in a room, in love,  
 in bliss all the time. Our parting has brought me misery.  
 We once made love, but sadly karma has taken my beloved away.  
 I count the months, the years not seeing my eye's jewel.  
 In all the world, no semblance of this heavenly flower can be found.  
 My sweet beauty, I love you equal to my own heart.

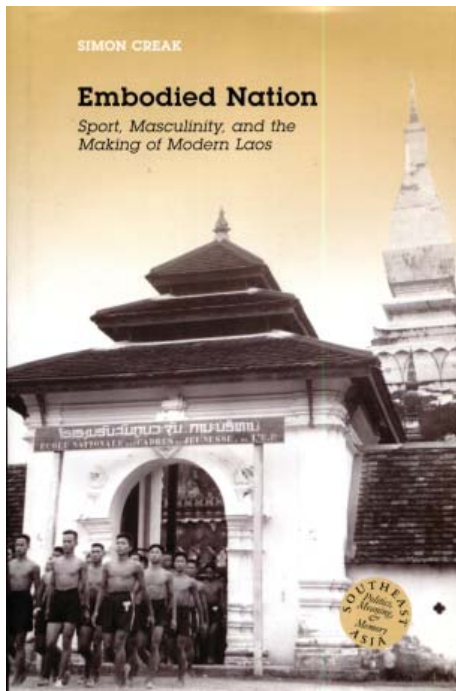
Prince Thammathibet was the designated heir of King Borommakot. In 1757, he was brought down by court intrigue, either because he was plotting to oust his father, or because his siblings framed him on this charge to undermine his chance to succeed. He confessed under torture that he had relations with four of his father's consorts, and these ladies implicated him in a coup plot to assassinate his father and many others. Thammathibet, the four ladies, and others involved all died as a result of flogging. In the royal chronicle's account, he expired after the 180th stroke.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Cushman (tr.), *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya* (Bangkok: Siam Society, 2000), 454–7; Bhawan Ruangsilp, *Dutch East India Company merchants at the court of Ayutthaya: Dutch perceptions of the Thai kingdom, c. 1604–1765* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 201–2.



## Review Article

*Embodied Nation: Sport, Masculinity, and the Making of Modern Laos* by Simon Creak.  
(Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-8248-3889-8. US\$54.00.



Laos is not a nation that excels in competitive sport, nor are the Lao preoccupied with physical fitness – which makes it all the more surprising to come across a book devoted to both. What is also surprising is the remarkable extent to which, even in Laos, as Simon Creak so well demonstrates, sport and fitness contribute to and are embedded in political culture and nation building. These linkages go back to the making of modern Laos under the aegis of French colonialism, which is where Creak begins; and continue through to the present day. Their interaction both reflects the political and social turmoil of the last century of Lao history, and provides a prism through which to examine it. To use sport and fitness in this way is both clever and perceptive.

Creak tells his story in eight chronological chapters. I shall outline these in some detail in order to reveal not just the dimensions of political, social and cultural interaction that Creak discovers in the history of sport and fitness in Laos, but also the breadth of his analysis. Only then shall I comment on what appear to be Creak's theoretical assumptions.

I want to begin, however, where Creak does, with the kind of incident that can so easily occur at a sporting event, when supporters of rival teams clash and hurl abuse at each other. For in the modern world, sporting contests have become vehicles for conflicting emotions associated with group identity, fed by the resentments of history and frustrations of the present. The incident Creak cannily chooses happened in February 1936 when a brawl erupted at a football match between a predominantly Vietnamese team and a predominantly Lao team competing for the local Bédier Cup. In commentaries after the match, each side focused on the failings of the other, as sportsmen and as civilised and educated people. But behind their antipathy lay a racial divide exacerbated

by anger over French policies that had created, in the name of a unified Indochina, a hierarchical administration in Laos with French at the top, Vietnamese in middle-level posts, and Lao mostly at the bottom. Thus, apparently atavistic racial emotions actually reflected a desire to assert a separate Lao identity, and their expression at a sporting event reinforced political awareness.

To sort out the causal relationships involved in this feedback loop is not straightforward, for they operate on three levels: the cognitive/psychological, the cultural/behavioural, and the social group level, and historians lack a paradigm theory linking the three. Instead, Creak argues that physical culture (in which he includes military training as well as competitive sport and fitness) and modern Lao history 'parallel' each other. But how, and to what effect?

To answer these questions, Creak situates his study in the context of debates over both the historiography of Laos and theories pertaining to the role of the body, its gendered physicality, in the construction of the nation-state. In a nutshell, Creak argues that physical culture 'substantialises' (gives substance to) conceptions not just of the body and masculinity, but of the nation itself (which he maintains is a 'cultural artefact'). In other words, by reinforcing consciousness of the nation-state, physical culture both reflects and augments state power. The theoretical debate is a bit abstruse, reflecting the origin of the book as a doctoral thesis, and in the end it is not entirely clear where the author stands.

Creak begins his first chapter with an analysis of how a peculiarly Lao contest called *tikhi* was interpreted by French scholars. *Tikhi* has both physical/competitive and ritual/cultural dimensions. It is not a sport in the modern sense for which players train long hours in order to compete; but then nor is it closely associated with any Buddhist belief or ceremony. If anything, its associations go back to pre-Buddhist *phi* (spirit) worship. Its most celebrated instance takes place during the three-day festival of the twelfth lunar month centred on the great stupa of That Luang in the Lao capital Vientiane. The contest opposes two equal 'teams' of unspecified number, each equipped with a sort of hockey stick. One team is made up of civil servants, representing 'administrators'; the other of inhabitants of nearby villages representing 'the people'. There is no referee and no rules other than to steer a ball into the opposing goal. The contest can be highly physical, but the people's side always wins two out of three matches, thus ensuring a prosperous year to come.

Creak's analysis of the various French and Lao descriptions and interpretations of *tikhi* aims not to adjudicate between them, but rather to show how different ways of understanding the contest contributed to different constructions of Lao 'national' culture, which could then be directed towards desired political ends. The historical context of this joint Franco-Lao elite project to create a culture for a country changed entirely, however, from the 1890s when French intentions were to use the territory they had seized east of the Mekong as a springboard to annex Lao areas west of the river, to attempts in the 1920s and 1930s to create an integrated *Indochine Française*. While constructing a uniquely Lao culture in the 1890s furthered French interests, to do so in the 1930s was more problematic: while it reinforced the distinction between Lao and Thai, it threatened to undermine France's Indochina project.

This political difference was not reflected in the discourse on *tikhi* that Creak examines, but then the reconstruction of a national culture to reinforce the political independence of an artificially truncated geographical entity was not primarily the product of French imperialism, and owed very little to interpretations of *tikhi*. Rather it was constructed by those Lao who found themselves within borders French and Thai machinations had created, as a political response to threats of absorption (as they saw it) by both their Thai and Vietnamese neighbours. And the culture they created was based upon Buddhist beliefs and communal memory of *Meuang Lao* as a *mandala* (spatial polity) separate from Siam stretching back 600 years. For any cultural construct to be socially learned requires both language and imagination, but these always advert to the co-ordinated social structural and materially productive practices of a population sharing a common worldview and building a common sociocultural niche.

In Chapter Two, Creak resurrects a little-known period of Lao history when it formed part of Vichy France, subjected to the propaganda and policies of French fascism. He shows how Nazi racist ideology was disseminated via Vichy France to Indochina in the form of an obsession with fitness education, manual work and sport as the means of building healthier and more masculine (or feminine) physically superior bodies in service of the state. In Laos, this took the form of a uniformed youth movement, with strong emphasis on quasi-military physical training.

The period from 1940 to 1941 coincided with the rise of a movement for national restoration known as *Lao Nhay* (literally Great Laos), a name not only conjuring up a time when the Kingdom of Lan Xang was a power to be reckoned with in mainland Southeast Asia, but also Lao claims to those northeast Thai provinces that had previously formed part of the Lao kingdom. Its immediate purpose was to oppose Thai expansionist ambitions and demand the return of the Lao provinces of Xayaburi and part of Champasak, west of the Mekong, seized by Thailand in 1940. As such the movement had French backing, not for any political implications of its cultural nationalism, but in order to strengthen a vulnerable part of French Indochina.

What has not previously been recognised was how the militaristic Vichy youth movement with its emphasis on physique and fitness, discipline and commitment, strength and growth, boosted the confidence of Lao participants in their ability to “rule themselves”. But it was this confidence, Creak argues, that gave leaders of the Lao Issara independence movement the courage to act decisively in 1945 when Japanese forces invited into Indochina by the Vichy administration suddenly interned their allies. This is a fascinating chapter that breaks new ground in understanding the history of this crucial period.

The outbreak of the First Indochina War and its political repercussions in Laos are the focus of Chapter Three. Lao units were recruited in the name of national defence, for which Lao youths were urged to prepare themselves by building their physical fitness – neatly illustrated in the photograph that graces the cover of *Embodied Nation* showing a double file of bare-chested youths marching out of their school in the That Luang cloisters to perform physical activities. The resulting militarization and masculinization of Lao society took place under French direction, not in support of Lao independence, but for the benefit of the French Union. Creak demonstrates how the masculine ideal of the

soldier was promoted through deconstructing publications, drawings and photographs of the time (all illustrated in the book), and in his analysis of the ceremonies in 1950 marking the transference of internal administrative powers to Lao authorities.

Full independence did not come until October 1953 while the Lao government was still deeply embroiled in a war not just against the Vietminh, but also their Lao Marxist allies, the Pathet Lao. So not surprisingly, the National Army came to symbolize the newly minted nation-state and its aspirations, most notably unity and modernity, the former not realised until formation of the First Coalition Government in November 1957; the latter a distant beacon. Creak shows how the image of the soldier as the embodiment of courage and discipline, fitness and strength, permeated Lao society as the ideal for all Lao youth to emulate – and incidentally prepared the ground for military leaders to enter politics.

In Chapter Four, Creak introduces a new theme – the use of sporting events as ‘theatrics of power’ to promote political ends. Creak takes this metaphor from Clifford Geertz’s concept of the ‘theatre state’ in which, in the case of Bali, state ceremonies were used to bolster the status, and thus political domination, of the ruling elite. In Laos, the first National Games were held in Viang Chan in November 1961 with similar political intent, as a spectacle replete with symbolism designed to unite the country, at a time of deep division and civil war, behind the government of strongman Major General Phoumi Nosavan. They were thus a transparent attempt to reinforce Phoumi’s legitimacy and power.

The Games brought together athletes from each of Laos’s twelve provinces, though Creak is unclear whether those representing provinces under Pathet Lao control did so with its blessing. While the theatrics of the Games borrowed from the example of the Olympics, their symbolism reiterated the ideal of Lao unity – from the flag with its twelve interlocking rings to the flame lighted simultaneously by an athlete from each province – at a time when it did not exist other than as a political ideal. Creak shows how the stated purpose of the Games, to strengthen a sense of solidarity between athletes from different parts of the country and to improve Lao sport to the level of international competition, identified sport both with progress and with the international standards expected of a modern nation-state.

The same theme of political unity was reiterated at the Second (and last) National Games of March 1964. But it was a hollow hope. Laos was being drawn inexorably into the Second Indochina War: Phoumi’s power was fading; and the Second Coalition Government had collapsed in all but name, its facade of unity in tatters. Creak does not compare and contrast the political messages of the two Games, but instead argues that both were attempts to use sport and physical fitness not just to promote political unity, which Phoumi himself had done so much to destroy, but more especially as symbols of the modernity and material progress to which every Lao aspired.

In Chapter Five, Creak adds a further regional and international dimension to his account, by showing how the tensions of the Cold War that wracked both Laos and the region were reflected in participation in rival sporting events. Sport was used to promote solidarity between nations that were politically aligned, as communist, anti-communist or neutral; and participation was a political decision taken for political purposes.



The SEAP Games were inaugurated in 1959 as a Thai initiative with strong American backing, grouping anti-communist states, including South Vietnam. The Games provided an opportunity to reinforce Lao credentials as a sovereign nation in the face of Thai condescension, and as Creak shows, it was rivalry with Thailand above all that fuelled Lao determination to compete on an equal footing. When the Lao team defeated ‘big brother’ Thailand in a regional football competition known as the King’s Cup in 1969, it was a cause for national pride and rejoicing.

Much more controversial were the Games of the Newly Emerging Forces (GANEFo) organised by Indonesia in competition with the Asian Games, to protest what President Sukarno believed to be Western dominance over the Olympic movement. Although designed as a contest between non-aligned states, the Games were widely interpreted as anti-American. Laos despatched a small team to the first GANEFo in Jakarta in 1963, but it was the second version, held in Phnom Penh with Chinese support three years later, that had major political repercussions. Claiming neutrality, the Lao government declined its invitation, whereupon a Pathet Lao team was invited. That its attendance provided international exposure for a revolutionary movement during a civil war was significant enough, but by nominally representing the nation as a whole, Pathet Lao participation claimed Laos as a member of the ‘socialist bloc’, thereby promoting an alternative, revolutionary conception of *Meuang Lao*. Membership of an alternative international network of states, Creak claims, contributed to what he calls the ‘global processes of organization’ that through this post-colonial phase of national construction created alternative competing versions of the Lao nation-state.

From the GANEFo Games of 1966, celebrated as the original event in the history of revolutionary sport in Laos, Creak jumps a decade to the role of physical fitness in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (LPDR), particularly in producing the ‘new socialist person’ (or citizen) who would build the new socialist Laos. This was to be achieved, according to official propaganda, through three revolutions – in production, technology, and consciousness.

Creak develops two themes here, one centring on the language of socialist propaganda (or its rhetoric, as Creak prefers), and the other on the contribution made by physical fitness – both to the three revolutions. With respect to the first, Creak argues that “Lao revolutionary rhetoric possessed a ... capacity to effect cultural change” (in opposition to the conclusion of the late Grant Evans that it did no such thing); and to the second that “the language of ideological production gains much of its force from physical idiom and metaphor” (both p. 170), which is equally questionable.

By any measure, the project of creating new socialist citizens was a failure. Not that this was admitted. For the ideologues of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP), language provided not a prism through which to view and shape reality, but a substitute for it. This is why the analysis of propaganda does not get us very far without some measure of its effect. Creak agrees that the first two revolutions did not achieve their objectives, but argues that this made the third, brought about through effect of language on thought and culture, all the more important – judged, curiously, not by their effectiveness, but by their means.

Creak reveals the extent to which mass sport and physical culture figured in both

the policies and rhetoric of the regime aimed at creating a new socialist consciousness and culture. He also reveals the failure of both. Not only was sporting infrastructure insufficient, but few Lao could be cajoled into mass morning callisthenics. As Creak concludes, this suggests “a significant disconnect between the LPRP and the masses it invoked in its rhetoric” (p. 185).

Faced with this failure, Creak turns to the prioritization of productive labour in both the rhetoric and ‘cosmology’ (by which he means ‘worldview’) of communist Laos – which incidentally was required to bring about the revolution in production. For this, workers had to be physically fit. Senior leaders were shown vigorously exercising, and in every propaganda poster the progress of socialism was proclaimed in images of cadres, soldiers and youths beaming with health and strength. On the basis of its images and language, Creak maintains that “socialist culture privileges physical attributes” (p. 192) – whether this translates into behavioural change or not.

In Chapter Seven, Creak extends his analysis to spectator sports, promoted by the regime as occasions of revolutionary ‘fun and liveliness’, as opportunities for fraternal exchange with athletes from other socialist countries, and as promoting the international reputation of Laos on the world stage. To these ends, sporting events figure prominently in the celebrations of all ‘historical days’ in the Lao calendar (commemorating the army, the Party, socialism and the regime), and in international exchanges (for example, between the three former Indochinese states).

The Lao National Games were revived, and Laos also participated in the international arena of the Olympic and Asian Games. The minimal success of Lao athletes was glossed over by lauding their exemplary efforts and application. As Creak shows, all these events promoted the political priorities of the regime: the superiority of socialism, its triumph in Laos, and the leadership of the Party. What is less convincing is his contention that spectator sports represent the perpetual activity demanded of socialism in the name of continuous progress; and that in this they differ from the spectacles of the 1960s. For ‘progress’ and ‘reform’ are catchcries of all political parties.

Creak’s final chapter jumps to 2009, when Laos was host to the 25th Southeast Asian Games, which he shows were no less political and contentious than any previous sporting event. Against all expectations, even though fewer sports were included, the Games were a triumphant success. Lao athletes performed remarkably well, and the Games provide a fitting conclusion to the book.

In examining the event itself and its political repercussions (not least over the controversial compensation awarded Chinese companies for financing construction of Games venues), Creak displays all his analytical skills. The final pages are a tour de force, but in arguing for the significance of sport in Lao history, Creak makes some long calls. It is one thing to maintain that Laos has entered a phase of ‘postsocialist developmentalism’, but why formation of a National Sport Committee reflected this transition is hard to see, in view of its self-justification as supporting the long-standing goals of national defence and socialist construction.

Creak also claims that “an abiding concern with physicality...has been fundamental to how Lao people have seen themselves and their place in the world” (p. 240), as reflected in the ‘changing imaginings’ of successive regimes, from colonial to post-socialist.

But this is not born out by the evidence presented, which has rather demonstrated how regimes have promoted sport for political purposes, and not always successfully – which suggests that another ‘significant disconnect’ exists between how the Lao government and ‘Lao people’ see themselves and their place in the world.

Thus it is a step too far to claim that “[p]hysical practices have constituted political power in a multitude of its dimensions” (p. 241). For the fact that conceptions of ‘national birth, resuscitation, progress, development and growth’ are all partly ‘physical’ (or natural or material) metaphors does not mean that physicality has been central to the construction of successive national identities. Indeed Creak himself suggests that the reverse also holds: that “the epistemologies, cosmologies, and ideologies that have formed modern Laos” have been given physical expression in sport and physical culture (p. 246), as well as vice versa. In fact, of course, a feedback loop exists, though causal relationships are not spelled out in any detail.

So what has led Creak to overplay his hand? We can see from the above chapter summaries that what Creak has done by selecting specific sporting events for analysis is not to write a narrative history of sport and physical fitness in Laos. That was never his intention. Rather it was to illustrate an overarching metaphor that equates the physical body not just with the body politic in Laos, but with the nation itself (as he states on p. 180 and elsewhere). But metaphors are literary devices, and as such can reverberate further than intended – which is why they tend to be embraced by post-modernists: by not being very precise, they invite multiple interpretations. Indeed the less precise, the more suggestive they are. By extending the metaphor of embodiment from the body politic to the nation, Creak is in danger of allowing the analysis of discourse to take precedence over causation. This is the postmodernist trap. Creak identifies as poststructuralist rather than postmodernist, but one easily blends into the other – and it doesn’t help that at one point Creak quotes the post-modernist historian Alan Munslow’s adage that ‘all history is historiography’.

Historians must be cautious in adopting any literary theory. For whereas literature makes no necessary referential claims beyond the language in which its forms and interpretations are expressed, history does. History is grounded not in discourse but in a methodology that works from material sources, not all of them by any means written texts. Within the spectrum of scholarly disciplines, history stands somewhere between literature and the social sciences, and is drawn in different ways towards each. Historians reconstruct the past in the form of narratives that causally relate events; and each reconstruction presents a hypothetical interpretation that remains open to criticism and reformulation. In doing so, as the *Annales* historians pointed out, history both draws upon and synthesises findings from across the social sciences, formulated in relation to their own middle-level theories. For this reason alone, no literary theory will ever be adequate as a theory of history – and postmodernism certainly is not. All that historians should take from postmodern literary theory, therefore, is the lesson that language is never transparent and that sources require perceptive interrogation.

Poststructuralism has more to offer historians, by insisting that the language in which source documents are written requires analysis of all the multiple layers of meaning, both intended and interpreted, they have accumulated over time. All source texts have a

life of their own, to which the work of each generation of historians contributes another layer. The lesson of poststructuralism, therefore, is methodological. Textual criticism is essential, however textual origins hark back to past events, and how these can best be reconstructed and understood is ultimately what historians seek to do.

Creak has used sport and physical fitness to reveal unsuspected dimensions of key events in Lao history, by showing how on each occasion they contributed to political objectives, competing ideologies, and the construction of national culture and consciousness. The examples he has chosen – from the Bédier Cup to *tikhi* to the GANEFO Games to the socialist experiment and the Southeast Asian Games – illuminate like intermittent strobe lights the way in which sport and politics have interacted at significant times in Lao history. Almost all these case studies break new ground. Such perceptive analysis need not depend on the trope of embodiment to sustain it.

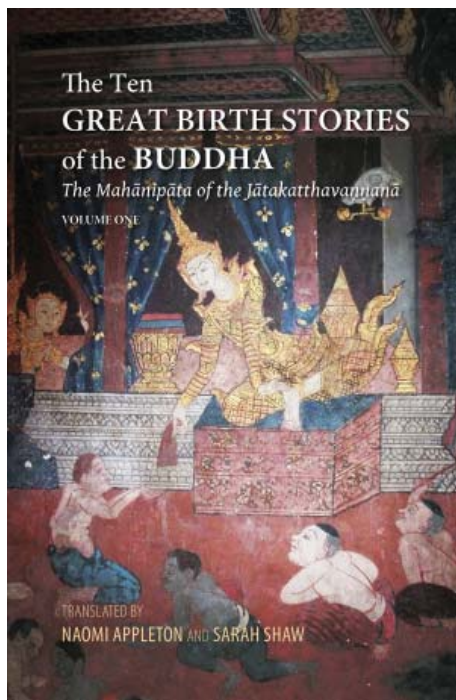
This is an insightful and intellectually demanding study, and theoretical references do not in places make it easy reading. But it repays perseverance. Factual errors are few (Laos obtained full independence in 1953, not 1954 (p. 20)). Footnoting is extensive, and so is the bibliography. In conclusion, the book makes a substantial contribution to Lao historiography, and will be required reading for those with a serious interest in Lao history.

Martin Stuart-Fox



## Reviews

*The Ten Great Birth Stories of the Buddha: The Mahānipāta of the Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* translated by Naomi Appleton and Sarah Shaw. Two volumes. (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books in cooperation with Chulalongkorn University Press, 2015.) ISBN: 9786162151125. 3,000 Baht.



Flying horses, magic gem-wielding ascetics, dancing snakes, seductive dancing, lecherous Brahmins, green gods, crippled children who can suddenly pick up chariots over their heads, and talking frogs that hide in princesses' hair – these are just some of the characters and creatures that are commonplace in the last Ten Birth Stories (*dasajātaka*) of the Buddha. The new English translation—the first serious one in over a century—of the ten most important stories in Southeast Asian Buddhism (and well-known in many other Buddhist lineages in South Asia, the Himalayas, and East Asia) by Naomi Appleton and Sarah Shaw is a momentous literary accomplishment. It is the most important English translation of a set of Pali texts to come out in years, not because of its rarity or linguistic complexity, but because of its literary, artistic, historical, and religious importance to tens of millions of Buddhists.

The last ten *Jātakas* are undoubtedly the most important Pali Buddhist stories in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. They are subject to thousands of mural depictions or bas reliefs in South and Southeast Asia, and have tellings in numerous vernacular languages. They, more than any other Buddhist texts, are the basis for ethical narratives throughout the region. Having an accessible, accurate, and dynamic translation of them in a beautifully-produced two volume box set is cause for celebration. They should be required reading for all courses in South and Southeast Asian Buddhism, Pali literature, Buddhist art history, Buddhist literature, and Southeast Asian cultural history.

Published in honor of the Sixtieth Birthday of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand (herself a scholar of the *Jātakas*) by Silkworm Books in cooperation with Chulalongkorn University Press, this collection of ten stories including the Temiya, Janaka, Sāma, Nemi, Mahosadha, Bhūridatta, Canda, Nārada, Vidhura, and

Vessantara *Jātakas* in over 500 pages can be read by students of religious and epic literature as a way of rethinking the way Buddhism has been traditionally taught in the West. Until recently, the *Jātakas*, have largely been studied as quirky folk stories that are fantastic tales designed to entertain children and the “unlettered masses.” They were often criticized by foreign scholars of Buddhism as not teaching the timeless values of Buddhism through didactic ethical treatises, but being salacious and distracting stories. The history of their reception has been well-documented over the past decade and I hope that the work of Naomi Appleton, Arthid Sheravanichkul, Peter Skilling, Steven Collins, Toshiya Unebe, Sandra Cate, Yohei Shimizu, Kazuko Tanabe, Leedom Lefferts, Bonnie Brereton, Richard Gombrich, Sarah Shaw, Lilian Handlin, myself, and others has helped elevate them to their rightful place in the pantheon of great world-epic stories. They might not reflect the cold rationality of Buddhism as imagined in the Victorian era, that never actually existed, but they are ethical tales of great insight, complexity, and vigor. Appleton and Shaw’s edition retains that vigor while providing a reliable translation that can be used in Pali language courses to help guide students. The footnotes are informative and show the restraint of seasoned translators who aim for clarity for the reader instead of overbearing philologists’ chest-beating.

Not only is the translation excellent, but the translators have also given scholars and students valuable tools for understanding the history and reception of these stories. First, they made the important decision to ask Peter Skilling, one of the most respected scholars of Pali and Thai literature (as well as Tibetan and Sanskrit), to write the foreword. He offers a short history of the importance of the last ten *Jātakas* in artistic depictions in early Indian Buddhism (especially at Ajanta, Bharhut, and Sanchi), as well as their literary value, citing the work of the Indian poet Haribhaṭṭa, who wrote: “A preacher of the dharma, having first recited one of the sermons of the Buddha, afterwards illuminates it in detail by telling a *jātaka* of the Bodhisattva—in the same manner as one illuminates a picture-gallery by the light of a torch—and (thereby) creates utmost happiness in the mind of his audience...” (xx). Skilling also points out the importance of the *Jātakas* in the inspiration of other vernacular texts.

Appleton and Shaw also provide a clear and instructive introduction. Indeed, for students and scholars, this should be the first thing one reads when approaching the *Jātakas*. They make several important points that I only have space to mention briefly. They correctly point out that the Thai tradition (started largely in the early 20th century with the writing of the Sangharat by the head of the Sangha, Prince Jinavarasiriwadhana) of associating each of the last ten *Jātakas* with a specific “perfection” (Thai: *barami*) does not necessarily match up with the purported contents of the *Jātakas* themselves nor with the Burmese or Sri Lankan traditions. These differences are clearly identified with helpful charts (6, 8). The Thai tradition seems to be inspired more by the *Cariyāpiṭaka* than the *Jātakanidāna*, although it is not merely derivative of these earlier Pali text lineages from South Asia. Second, even though the *Jātakas* always have the bodhisattva (future Buddha) as the main character, other characters often steal the show. For example, Khaṇḍahālā, Rucā, Indra/Sakka, Vimalā, Jujuka, Maṇimekhalā, and others are often the movers of the plot, while the bodhisattva seems removed at many times. These ancillary and supporting characters are often the ones that provide the intense emotional

content of the *Jātakas*. I would have liked Appleton and Shaw to discuss the role of the god *Indra/Sakka* a bit more, although admittedly they discuss him more than most scholars of the *Jātakas* have before (9, 22-24). The large number of images, shrines, and artistic depictions of Indra (including a modern comic book series in Thailand) are a direct result of his role in the *Jātakas*, and his impact on Southeast Asian culture cannot be underestimated. Appleton and Shaw also have two informative sections on kingship (while strategically avoiding any extensive commentary on the present king of Thailand's interest in the *Jātakas*, especially the Janaka, even though they allude to it on pages 37 and 46) and the literary qualities of the stories (24-25). However, I found it strange that they did not cite the extensive work by Holt (1991), Tambiah (1976), and many others on the counterpointing of renunciants and kings in popular Buddhist stories.

One of the most interesting parts of their introduction is where they astutely point out the importance of women in the last ten *Jātakas*. Although they acknowledge that women are often depicted as flighty and weak at best, and often dangerous temptresses at worst in many *Jātakas*, there are some women who are complex figures, like the nun Uppalavanna, who appears in five stories (9). Appleton and Shaw also emphasize that mothers, like the mother of the Bodhisattva Temiya and Sivali, the wife of Janaka, are not to be discounted as simply passive observers of their powerful sons (19). To support their argument, this complexity is also seen in artistic depictions of the *Jātakas*. For example, in a recent paper at the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeology and Art History (Paris, 2015) Jessica Patterson demonstrated that female characters like the goddess Maṇimekhalā (mentioned on page 38) are depicted in art and text as tender and motherly, intelligent and insightful, as well as aggressive seductresses all within the same story. I would also add that women in the *Jātakas* often provide some comic relief. For example, Forrest McGill of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco showed me several 19th century Thai paintings where Jujuka's wife appears as a powerful woman criticizing her lecherous husband and where her female friends mock their marriage by encouraging her to use dildos to replace him. The *Jātakas* certainly inspire a wide range of interpretations and adaptations!

This two-volume work is also a model of the value of collaborative work, something Buddhist Studies lacks. Shaw and Appleton both bring their strengths to this study and translation. Appleton is no stranger to the study of the *Jātakas*. Her 2010 book, *Jātaka Stories in Theravāda Buddhism* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), was an excellent overview and literary analysis of the genre. She followed that up with her expansive *Narrating Karma and Rebirth: Buddhist and Jain Multi-life Stories* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), and she even runs a very useful blog about Pali and Sanskrit narrative studies: <https://naomiappleton.wordpress.com/>. I have benefited from following her work for many years and reviewed her first book on the *Jātakas* in 2011. In that review I had one major criticism: "I would have liked to have seen a more extensive discussion of murals, dramatic and performative devices and styles, musical scores, comic books, films, sermons, and other cultural expressions of the *jātakas*." Shaw is also no stranger to the study of the way texts are used in dynamic modern contexts in places like Thailand. Among her many publications is her contribution to the excellent book, *Illuminating*

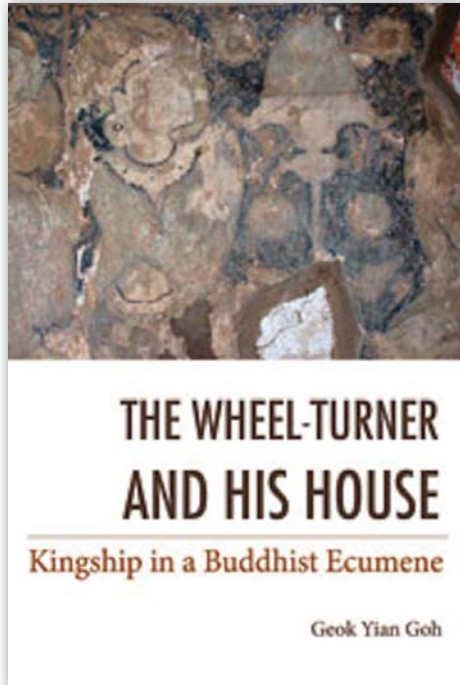
*the Life of the Buddha: An Illustrated Chanting Book from Eighteenth-century Siam* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2013), written jointly with Naomi Appleton and Toshiya Unebe, where she traces the detailed history of a single manuscript. Working together, Shaw and Appleton have rendered my earlier criticism moot. They offer a lengthy (well, as lengthy as one can be permitted in an introduction to a translation) description of the various ways that the last ten *Jātakas* have been depicted in art, especially in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Thailand (35-47). Here we see their past work with Thai mural specialist, Toshiya Unebe, as well as their consultation with Burmese art historian Lilian Handlin and Thai specialists like Arthid Sheravanichkul and Peter Skilling, as being really helpful. They also cite recent work done on Lao and Northeast Thai depictions of the *Jātakas*. Not only is this section a welcome addition to the study of the *Jātakas*, but they also include almost 200 color plates of these murals that bring the stories alive for readers. My only major criticism here is that they failed to consult the many important studies of *Jātaka* texts, murals and reliefs written in Thai and Japanese. They also did not consult closely studies in the Burmese, Khmer, Lao, or Sinhala languages. However, this introduction is not necessarily designed for Buddhist Studies specialists (although I think specialists will learn a lot from this work) and is meant to expose these extremely important stories to English-speaking students and those interested in comparative literature.

In the end, students and scholars will delight in reading Appleton and Shaw's beautiful translation and thorough and insightful introduction. In my opinion, these translations are, alongside Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit's translation and study of the *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* epic (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2010), evidence of the vibrancy of literary studies in Buddhist South and Southeast Asia today. It should be the primary introduction to the genre for many years to come.

Justin Thomas McDaniel



*The Wheel-Turner and his House: Kingship in a Buddhist Ecumene* by Geok Yian Goh, (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press. 2015.) ISBN: 978-0-87580-716-4. US\$35.00



G.H. Luce's celebrated *Old Burma-Early Pagan* opens with a lengthy chapter devoted solely to Pagan's first important king, Aniruddha (c. 1044 – c. 1077). Sifting through inscriptions and chronicles, this doyen of Burmese civilization concluded with characteristic self-reflection, "... when all is said, Aniruddha remains a dim figure ...." (Luce 1969-1970: 1.14). Indeed, our meager evidence surviving from his reign and the classic Pagan (Bagan) period (c. 11th – c. 13th centuries) ensures that the 'real' Aniruddha, that is, the historical Aniruddha, will remain a 'dim figure' about whom myth and conjecture overshadow fact. Geok Yian Goh bravely takes up where Luce left off in this groundbreaking study which brilliantly explores the genesis and transmission of the Aniruddha legends that mushroomed following the Pagan period.

Aniruddha's legacy remains very much alive today in Burma (Myanmar) where he is known as Anawrahta, his name used in most later chronicles. He is remembered today for two pivotal roles: as the country's first unifier and as the ruler who single-handedly introduced Theravada Buddhism to the nation. He is therefore often lumped together with Bayinnaung (1551-1581) and Alaungpaya (1752-1760), monarchs who also expanded the country's borders through arms. A favorite of Burma's military, this august trio is now immortalized by enormous bronze effigies in Naypyidaw. But Anawrahta stands apart, since his career is so entwined with Burma's religious history.

Anawrahta slips comfortably into a long list of historical figures enveloped in myth. A well-known parallel is Emperor Ashoka whose posthumous biographies diverge radically from the little gleaned in his famous stone edicts. Myths, as the author underscores, are like open-ended books, with added chapters reflecting ever-changing political and social milieux. This explains why bits and pieces of legends are sometimes entirely dropped or reinterpreted and why Anawrahta's legacy was never restricted to a single definitive version. Indeed, chroniclers openly wrestled with contradictory accounts of Anawrahta as they formulated their own conclusions, as Goh notes. Anawrahta's legacy was therefore fluid, fashioned from many different pieces, with each version differing slightly, all coexisting in time and space.

The version that carries most weight today flows directly from the famous *Hmannam Yazawindawgyi*, authored by court savants in Inwa, or Ava, around 1829; a portion was translated into English, titled *The Glass Palace Chronicle*. (Luce & Pe Maung Tin 1923)

Anawrahta weaves in and out of nearly forty dense pages, the chief episodes being his conversion to Buddhism by the monk Shin Arahāṇa, the capture of the Canon, or *Tipiṭṭika*, from Thaton in Lower Burma, his suppression of the heretical Ari and the imposition of Buddhism at Pagan. Over a dozen separate fanciful incidents fill these pages, such as quarrels with his half-brother and son, and even his failed union with a Shan princess. Whence did this legendary material come and why and when did it filter into the various chronicles are the questions at the heart of the ambitious task set by the author.

The book opens by reviewing what is known about Anawrahta from Pagan-period sources. The only tangible evidence from his reign are scores of small terracotta ‘votive tablets’ bearing the king’s name, suggesting to scholars long ago that Anawrahta is the first important Pagan ruler whose historicity is certain. These tablets have been discovered widely, from Katha in Upper Burma right down to Tenasserim. Goh attributed one Pagan inscription to Anawrahta’s reign, with a possible date of 1058, but others have more plausibly attributed it to the time of Kyauzzittha (c. 1084 - c. 1112) (Aung-Thwin 2005:84-85; personal communication, Tun Aung Chain).

Goh advances the notion that Anawrahta’s later fame was predicated in large part on his presumed epithet, *cakravartin* (Sanskrit), or *cakkavatti* (Pali). One literal translation is ‘wheel-turner’, broadly interpreted as ‘universal monarch.’ (p. 17) No stone inscriptions from his reign survive, but a single Pagan epigraph, dated 1207, refers posthumously to the king as “*cakkravattiy Anuruddha*.” The strongest evidence for Anawrahta’s assumption of this title, though not brought forth, is that one of Anawrahta’s successors, Kyauzzittha, adopted the title as part of his extended epithet in two inscriptions (“*paramiswarabalacakkrāwar*”) (Duroiselle 1917: 142, 144). However, following Kyauzzittha, the term is very rarely found in Pagan inscriptions, for unexplained reasons (Frasch 1996: 86). Also, the term *cakravartin*, or *cakkavatti*, enjoyed very little currency in inscriptions and even in chronicles in subsequent centuries, as the author acknowledges. (p. 24) For example, in Bayinnaung’s Bell Inscription or in Alaungpaya’s records, the terms are noted by their absence. In post-Pagan contexts, the term is therefore used sparingly and is usually written as *chakravatē* (personal communication, Tun Aung Chain). Moreover, in the copious inscriptions from the Buddhist kingdom of Sukhothai, the term occurs rarely and not as an epithet (Griswold & Prasert 1972: 119). Taken together, perhaps we can conclude that far too much weight has been attached to this concept in modern historical writing on mainland Southeast Asia, especially in view of the term’s restricted use (Leider 2015: 403-404; personal communication, Jacques Leider; Gombrich 1988: 82). Moreover, diverse evidence has too often been improperly interpreted “to reconstruct a supposedly commonly shared notion of Southeast Asian Buddhist kingship.” (Leider 2015: 403)

If the designation ‘*cakravartin*’ does not likely explain Anawrahta’s later importance, then how did this king come to enjoy such an influential legacy in Burma and even in Northern Thailand where he made cameo appearances in certain chronicles. His enduring legacy likely springs from his actual conquest of Lower Burma, an event of momentous consequence that altered the direction of Burmese history. This distinction between the role played by his presumed epithet of *cakravartin* in the formulation of his legacy and his actual military accomplishments may seem like splitting hairs, but

it sheds a different perspective on Anawrahta and the very process by which facts and fiction are spun around historical figures and incorporated into chronicles.

If Anawrahta achieved his lasting status through a conquest of Lower Burma, then what is the evidence? His small portable terracotta ‘votive tablets’ in Lower Burma



(above) Anawrahta's tiles were placed around the top terraces of the Maung Di stupa, near Yangon.

(below) The largest tiles in Southeast Asia, nearly 3 feet in height. All are in fragments.



are often taken as proof for Anawrahta's southern campaign, but Goh rightly questions this. (p. 52) The author cites *en passant* the Maung Di stupa located between Yangon and nearby Twante and attributed by Luce to Anawrahta. (Luce: 1969-1970; I. 23) The full significance of the Maung Di monument has not been tapped, since it provides a convincing argument for Anawrahta's presence in Lower Burma. Dozens of large terracotta plaques connected to Anawrahta encircled the stupa's two lower terraces which supported the solid brick dome; the tiles were never part of the stupa's original design, strongly suggesting that they were placed on the monument after its completion. These tiles closely resemble the common small ‘votive tablets’ in design, measuring no more than seven inches in height, but the Maung Di plaques are huge. By far the largest ‘votive tiles’ in Southeast Asia, each stands nearly three feet and weighs no less than thirty pounds (h. 2 ft. 7 in. x w. 1 ft. 6. in. x d. 5 ½ in.). Many retain incised Pali inscriptions with the same brief text used on certain common small tiles: “This Blessed One [the Buddha] was made by the great king, Śrī Aniruddha the divine, with his own hands, for the sake of deliverance”. (Luce 1968-1969: III. 2) By setting these large

tiles on a pre-existing Mon stupa, Anawrahta was intentionally proclaiming Pagan's new hegemony in Lower Burma. The large plaques, by their size and location *in situ*, differ qualitatively from the many small ‘votive tablets’ of Anawrahta found in Lower Burma. The moulds for the tiles were probably taken down from Pagan expressly for producing tiles used in this fashion; a few unpublished fragmentary tiles from the same moulds were recently found at Pagan (personal communication, Thein Lwin). We can never know if Anawrahta personally supervised his troops in the South, but his forces were certainly there. Ironically, while this stupa near Yangon can be associated with



Anawrahta with remarkable certainty, no monuments at Pagan can be attached to the king's patronage with the same degree of confidence. It may be true, as Goh and others have presumed, that the Shwesandaw stupa and Hpetleik monuments date to Anawrahta's reign, but no firm proof exists.

Additional evidence are Anawrahta's small 'votive tiles' discovered within the relic chamber of the Pyu-period Bawbawgyi stupa at Śrī Kṣetra; other confirmations are stone inscriptions in Lower Burma from Anawrahta's immediate successors, starting with Sawlu's near Mergui and Kyanzittha's Mon records in and around Thaton, two of which are dated to 1098 (Luce 1968-1969: I. 19, 46, 56). This art historical evidence may seem unrelated to the book's thesis, but the king's lasting legacy was a product of this very conquest and had little to do with his presumed epithet of *cakravartin* or *cakkavatti*.

A key source in the trajectory of Anawrahta's legacy is the Kalyani Inscription in Pegu (Bago), dated to c. 1479. This comes only some 200 years after the Pagan era and the shift of the capital to Inwa, and therefore furnishes the earliest reliably dated recording of a key part of the Anawrahta legend, that is, the capture of Thaton, the Pali canon and the city's monks. The inscription also contains the first mention of the Mon king in Thaton, "Manohari" whose "weak kingdom" presumably accounted for his defeat. (Taw Sein Ko 1893:17) The name that appears in the inscription itself is Manohara (personal communication, Jason Carbine). In later chronicles, this same king was taken prisoner to Pagan where he expired; in the *Glass Palace Chronicle*, he is Manuha. Known by many variants, this ruler can likely be identified with a king named Makuṭa noted in two Thaton inscriptions assigned to the 11th century. (Luce 1969-1970: I. 24) No evidence suggests that Anawrahta's actual conquest was spurred by a desire to seize the Pali Canon in Thaton, as Goh rightly points out.

By linking Anawrahta to the captured Canon from Thaton, the Mon in Pegu laid claim to establishing Buddhism at Pagan; and it was indeed this very version of history expressed in the Kalyani Inscription that shaped the entire history of Buddhism in Burma in all major subsequent royal and religious chronicles (Pranke 2004: 23, 201, note 73; personal communication, Patrick Pranke). The only major components added later to the legacy were the king's conversion by the monk Shin Arahān and the suppression of the Ari, elements first recorded only in the early 18th century. This evidence suggests that Mon chronicles available in 1479 preserved the memory of the invasion of Rāmaññadesa by Anawrahta but painted the Mon defeat in a positive light by claiming that the Mon furnished Upper Burma with the *Tipiṭika*. The next important step for tracking Anawrahta's narrative is the influential *Mahayazawingyi*, or *Great Chronicle*, c. 1720, by U Kala in which virtually the full-blown legend is found. Once Burmese chroniclers embraced the idea that the Canon came to Upper Burma from Thaton, expressed in the Kalyani Inscription, this triggered a lasting need to elevate Thaton in the ongoing religious history of the nation. This probably explains why the famous 5th century Buddhaghosa is said in certain later chronicles to have been associated with Thaton (Luce & Pe Maung Tin 1923: 46). A separate chapter, "Makers of Burmese History after U Kala", is a rigorous in-depth discussion of the numerous chronicles subsequent to U Kala and their role in shaping the legends.



Anawrahta's fame extended beyond Burma where his name figures, albeit rarely, in chronicles from Sri Lanka and Northern Thailand. Goh summarizes the Sri Lankan evidence, based mostly on the famous *Culavamsa*, in which "Anuraddha" is named once. He is said to assist King Vijayabahu I (c. 1070 - c. 1110) by sending gifts for motivating Sri Lankan troops into fighting the Cholas. These passages indicate that "Anuraddha" was a well-known player in the geo-politics of the Bay of Bengal. The 'facts' are reported in 'historical' time, unlike the Thai chronicle tradition framed in 'legendary' time.

The treatment of Anawrahta in Northern Thailand is most fully expressed in the well-known Pali chronicle, *Jinakamali* (JNM) by Ratanapañña, 1516/1517, in which "Anuruddha" appears in two different sections. Goh interprets passages in the JNM to suggest that the kingdom of Haripunjaya "derived its Buddhist traditions from both Myanmar and Sri Lanka" (p. 99), but the references in the JNM are far more narrow in focus since the sections in which "Anuruddha" appears are devoted merely to enhancing two lineages of Buddha images in Thailand. (p. 99) One case involves a set of five black stone Buddhas fashioned by the ancestors of "Manohāra" in "Ramanṇa Country"; Manohāra refused to hand over the images to Anawrahta, prompting an invasion in which Manohāra is sent captive to Pagan. (Jayawickrama 1968: 156). The JNM, as Goh observes, has conflated the story about seizing the Pali canon with this set of Buddha images.

Anuruddha weaves again into the JNM in the peregrinations of the Emerald Buddha, an image prophesied to "shine among the races of Kamboja, Arimaddana, and Syām" that was eventually taken to Sri Lanka (Jayawickrama 1968: 142) 'Anuruddha' retrieved it from Sri Lanka, with four sets of *Tipiṭikas*. The Emerald Buddha, with two sets of scriptures, returned to Burma on a separate ship, which sailed astray and landed in Mahānagara, or Angkor. 'Anuruddha' then mounted a flying horse, and, after demonstrating his prowess by cleaving a stone with his urine at Mahānagara, is conducted to the king from whom he demands the Canon. The Angkor ruler ceded the sets but 'Anuruddha' left for home "without remembering the Jewel-Image [Emerald Buddha]." (Jayawickrama 1968:144) In each case, Anawrahta serves only as a foil to elevate the importance of the Buddhist images found in Northern Thailand. Anawrahta is nowhere described as a *cakravartin* in this Northern Thai chronicle but this dated text indicates that the conquest of Lower Burma and Anawrahta's mythical or factual link to Manohara enjoyed a secure place in regional chronicles centuries after the supposed events.

To explain these occurrences in three disparate regions, Pagan, Northern Thailand and Sri Lanka, Goh proffers the concept of the *ecumene*, or a common Buddhist civilization that shared fundamental values. It came into being in the 11th century and flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries when "intense exchanges occurred between the three centers"; the *ecumene* began declining in the 14th century with "the end of Pagan, the rise of Ayutthaya and the demise of Polonnaruwa" (p. 38). The term *ecumene* comes from Greek, one definition for which is 'house' and by extension a region "which shared common cultural beliefs and practices". (p. 42). The *ecumene* "functioned as a religious political sub-system within a larger Buddhist world system and had a specific time span,

from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> century.” (p. 42). One wonders if such a distinct beginning and termination of the *ecumene* is somewhat arbitrary, in light of the strong continuous contacts among Southeast Asian Buddhist kingdoms and Sri Lanka throughout the second millennium. Indeed, the 15th century could be proposed as a watershed of shared influence, in light of the Mon missions to the Kalyani monastery near Colombo and the numerous references in Sukhothai inscriptions linking Sri Lanka, Lower Burma and Thailand. Indeed, precisely these interconnections in the 15th century prompted one scholar to use the word *ecumene* in relation to this very period (Frasch 2011).

Another pivotal moment in Anawrahta’s legendary biography is his conversion by the monk Shin Araham who hailed from Thaton. This well-known story is modeled directly upon the later legends of Ashoka’s conversion, a major observation first made by Patrick Pranke (Pranke 2004: 201, notes 72, 73). As Luce observed, the Shin Araham of the later chronicles is likely the very same chief priest, or “*mahathera*”, also named Araham, who is featured in a lengthy inscription by Kyanzittha, attributed to c. 1102. (Luce 1969-1970: I. 72; Duroiselle 1923: 1-68). This Araham of the Pagan period, according to the Pagan inscription, presided over extensive ceremonies involving 1,408 monks; whether Araham hailed from Thaton or served under Anawrahta cannot be fixed, but he was certainly a key cleric at Pagan whose memory persisted for centuries. That this Araham of the later legends and the historical Araham are probably one and the same, though unstated in the book, is another illustration of how historical figures were interpreted freely by later chroniclers. But a basic question is what exactly was known about Pagan’s history, real or legendary, to the chroniclers immediately following the classic Pagan period?

An instructive parallel with Anawrahta is the Mon ruler based in Pegu, Rajadhiraj (c. 1384 – c. 1420). This king weaves in and out of Mon/Burmese and Thai chronicles in a fashion reminiscent of Anawrahta. His personal sobriquet was Sutasoma, taken from a heroic figure in a *jataka*, no. 537; the name is attested to in the 15th century Shwedagon Inscription. The king’s White Elephant, according to a Mon chronicle, was a gift to his descendants from a ruler in Sukhothai, thereby forging a tie, albeit probably mythical, with a powerful neighboring kingdom ruled by an unnamed king who was, based on the chronology, none other than Ram Khamhaeng. (San Lwin 2007: 9) Yet in a second chronicle, Sutasoma is said to have presented his daughter to the famous King Mangrai of Chiang Mai. (Tun Aung Chain 2003: 6) Sutasoma turns up for a third time, in *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, in which he is conflated with a powerful king ruling in Mottama, or Martaban, identified indirectly with the famous Wareru (Wyatt & Aroonrut 1998: 36). Sutasoma, like Anawrahta, was yet another strong ruler whose legacy was preserved in chronicles and probably folklore, local theatre and ballads.

Both Anawrahta and Sutasoma demonstrate how the memories of strong monarchs coursed through diverse chronicle traditions spread over a wide area and many centuries, ready to be tapped in narratives. A blatant example was the claim by King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) in the Mingun Bell Inscription that Anawrahta failed to wrest the Mahamuni Buddha from Rakhine; the Buddha image itself then prophesied to Anawrahta that it would be taken from Rakhine only by the Buddha of the Future, Metteyya, that is, Bodawpaya himself (Tun Aung Chain 2014: 195). European history

affords similar examples, such as the Plantagenet's ties to the legendary King Arthur or the Capetian claims on Charlemagne.

The last chapter is a fitting conclusion, since Anawrahta's story is taken right up to the present. A thoughtful review of recent books and films suggests the various nuanced versions of today's Anawrahta legends, blending his religious and soldierly roles. A line quoted from a speech delivered by the former Senior-General Than Shwe leaves no doubt about the revival of this ancient revered king. (p. 3) Another reminder of how the present piggybacks on the past is Pagan's recently built 'Anawrahta Palace', adding yet another gargantuan eyesore to the site's scarred landscape.

The author's dogged pursuit of this shadowy king's legacy takes us squarely into a neglected dimension of historical writing in Southeast Asia, that is, how historical figures and events are endlessly re-interpreted. This pioneering book, it is hoped, will spur others to follow in Goh's footsteps and unravel the history and myths of other key Southeast Asian protagonists. The *Wheel-Turner* is a must-read for those interested not only in pre-modern Southeast Asia but also in understanding how the past is reinvented in our time.

Donald M. Stadtner

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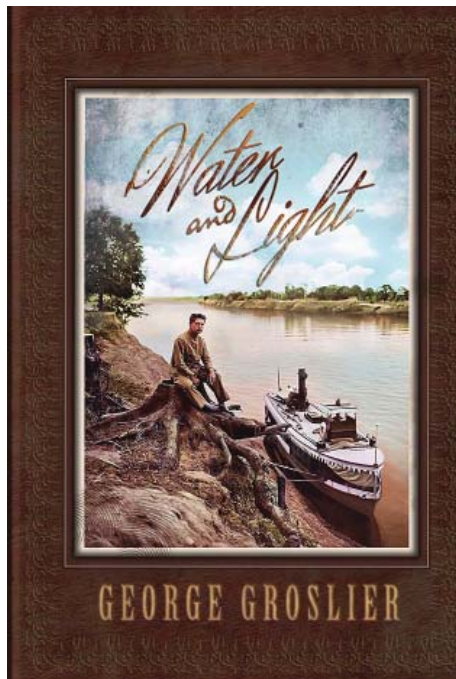
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*Water and Light*, by George Groslier, translated by Pedro Rodríguez, edited by Kent Davis (Florida, USA: DatAsia Press, 2016). ISBN 1934431877 and ISBN 978-1934431870. US\$34.95.



*Water and Light* recounts two river journeys on the Cambodian Mekong made by George Groslier in September-October 1929 and February-March 1930. Born in Phnom Penh in 1887 to Antoine Groslier, a French administrator, and his wife Angelina, George's first stay in Cambodia only lasted two years. When Angelina miscarried her second child, she quickly took George back to the safety of France, later giving him the opportunity to benefit from a Western education, studying at the School of Fine Arts in Paris. In 1910, aged 23, Groslier returned to Cambodia to take charge of a mission at the service of Albert Sarraut (1872-1962). Then Minister of Public Education, Sarraut would in his long political career serve as Governor-General of Indochina, as Minister for Colonies and briefly as Prime Minister of France. Sarraut's trust in Groslier's abilities would have a profound effect on his

professional life. Groslier was tasked with the documentation of the kingdom's most remote Khmer temples and founding a new school for the preservation and restoration of Cambodia's traditional arts. His real mission, and enduring legacy, was to preserve Khmer art and culture by establishing the Albert Sarraut Museum (now the National Museum of Cambodia) and the School of Fine Arts.

The background of *Water and Light* was Cambodia at a time when the country was as yet untouched by the great crises that would befall Indochina in the 1930s and beyond. The two journeys took Groslier to numerous places, including Kampong Cham, Stung Treng, Kratie, the Bassac River, Angkor Borei, the Tonlé Sap and Kampong



Chhnang. The travel accounts are populated with villages stretched along the Mekong, screaming children playing in the water and exotic plants. It was a journey for the senses, where hearing plays its role in assembling and making sense of life in the immediate surroundings: “At dawn I checked the nocturnal picture sketched by my ears” (p. 13).

The objective of Groslier’s account, as he states in his Preface, is to inform anyone who had “never seen Cambodia”, or indeed anyone who would probably never see the country. At times, his enthusiasm in trying to share *his* Cambodia with readers in faraway lands can result in added emphasis, as when he defines as “drought” the period of dry weather that follows the seasonal rains, no doubt to convey better the arid state of the land. In September and October, at the height of the rainy season, torrential rains transform the lives of subsistence communities dwelling on the banks of the Mekong. The river has scaled five metres to reach the once dry lowlands. Banana trees have lost their trunks, animals sleep on rafts fashioned from banana trunks and only boats ply the waters between houses. The dry season ensues from December to May, and communities anxiously await the onset of the rainy season to saturate their parched land. The trees that were inundated by torrential rains a few months earlier, and to whose trunks Groslier tied his boat, now tower over him by some five metres, with their exposed roots dishevelled but still somehow managing to remain upright.

By reworking descriptions of repetitive routines for the daily tasks of riverine life, Groslier has transformed a potentially “dry” documentary account into a work of art, like “a painter producing a new sketch daily” (p. XVII). The book’s unique strength lies in its ability to provide a detailed account of life in rural communities and the slow-paced daily routine punctuated by hardships, acts of kindness, rituals and devotion, but chiefly, by the challenges inherent in communities where acceptance of one’s fate has its own rewards.

Groslier took steps to revive and insulate Cambodia’s traditional arts from Western influence, in all its manifestations. For instance, he laments the decline in travel by boat due to the automobile becoming the chief mode of transport: “the old Cambodia has been so thoroughly upset by Western influence that soon any voyage, even at a rower’s pace, will be thoroughly disappointing” (pp. 3-4).

This context is useful in dealing with Groslier’s indignation at the influence exercised on the traditional arts by foreign concepts, as when he discovers that images of French soldiers guard the entrance to a concrete pagoda, replacing the traditional *dvarapala* guardian deities. Groslier is unable to contain his disdain for the soldier’s representation: “a melon atop his head, a rifle, and a toothy expression. Over the past eight days I have seen more French soldiers at pagoda doors than are stationed at the Phnom Penh garrison” (p. 49).

Groslier has been called an anti-colonial French colonialist. His account largely refrains from using the disparaging terms employed by some of his contemporaries: scholars and administrators steeped in the colonial mould, borne out of France’s *mission civilisatrice*. Unlike most colonial administrators, who were born and bred in Metropolitan France, Groslier charts his journeys as someone who is proud of his birthplace, for its beauty, achievements and inherent flaws. He depicts life along the Mekong not as a foreign observer, but as a patient host, leading the reader by the hand

and generously sharing his knowledge of the country. However, it is not a wholly objective account because, by his own admission, his pen was swayed by “fifteen years of Cambodian life” (p. 4).

In his native Cambodia, he feels sufficiently at ease to use self-deprecating terms. Though far from corpulent, he blames his “seventy kilos of flaccid flesh” (p. 31) as the source of discomfort during his trips. At other times, his “Western rump” (p. 14) overhangs a 50 cm-wide pirogue, barely adequate for local lithe bodies. On another occasion, a makeshift bridge fashioned from bamboo poles can only advance at the rate of 500 metres (0.5 km) per hour, despite his manservant pushing the contraption, because Groslier is “no acrobat” (p. 39).

Scattered in this delightful book are hints that Groslier struggled to accept some aspects of Cambodia’s customs, as when he expresses disapproval for the discarded religious icons “left to the termites”, or other religious artefacts “disassembled and rotting in a calamitous heap” (p. 51) inside a pagoda. His indignation, laudable for its concern with Cambodia’s cultural heritage, should be juxtaposed against the context of impermanence, the same concept that surrounds the creation and immediate destruction of a lovingly constructed sand mandala in Tibetan Buddhism. What Western eyes construe as ‘neglect’ may just embody acceptance of the inescapable process of perishability in a Theravada Buddhist country. Other seemingly incongruous aspects of Cambodian life lead Groslier to retort, not without a hint of irony, that Buddhist monks are beholden to a life of begging but are nevertheless served like princes, sworn to humility but addressed by people who kneel in their presence, and whose vows of self-denial appear not to interfere with the consumption of large quantities of food and sweets (p. 66).

At the end of the 19th century and early in the 20th century, numerous publications relayed journeys across Indochina or along the Mekong, for the most part commissioned by the French government and lasting two years or more. The longest, and arguably the most renowned, of the 19th century missions to Indochina was led by Auguste Pavie (1847-1925) and his trusted officers. Though some of these early river journeys are on a very different scale, some comparisons are useful, particularly with the expedition led by Ernest Doudart de Lagrée (1823-1868), whom Groslier briefly mentions (p. 139).

In July 1866, Doudart de Lagrée sailed from Stung Treng (in present-day Cambodia but formerly a Lao territory) to explore the Mekong as a trade route between southwestern China and the mouth of the river near Saigon. His voyage of exploration became a template of sorts for subsequent Mekong voyages, including the 1882 expedition led by Paul Neïs, a French naval surgeon who documented his explorations in *Travels in Upper Laos and Siam*. Neïs, who ascended the Mekong from Bassac, expressed his admiration for “the rigorous exactness of the itineraries of the mission of Commander de Lagrée” (p. 11). Although the journeys narrated in *Water and Light* span weeks, rather than months, what they lack in chronological scope is generously compensated for by richness of detail.

Whereas Groslier’s account illustrates the *minutiae* of daily life along this majestic river, Doudart de Lagrée’s descriptions are concerned with the constraints and challenges of quantifying the navigability of the Mekong, as documented in his *Exploration*

*et missions de Doudart de Lagrée*, published in 1883.<sup>1</sup> His account is not wholly preoccupied with quantitative details, however. Included are instances of compassion and understanding of human frailties, as when he writes, without a hint of rancour, that the expedition members had to share their rice with the boatmen, who misjudged the duration of the Mekong journey and had insufficient rice stocks of their own. It is these poignant details that bridge the gap with Groslier's *Water and Light*, an intimate account narrated by an "insider" at ease in the country of his birth.

Distilled to around 200 pages from an original manuscript of 600 pages, Groslier's recollections flow without discernible gaps. As an account of life along the Cambodian stretch of the Mekong early in the 20th century, *Water and Light* fills a gap in the literature, to balance the precisely quantified accounts from the period, which often lack the qualitative details for a window into a country's soul.

*Water and Light* is greatly expanded from the original and includes annotations, hand-restored coloured images, additional images and supplemental materials, with appendix articles by Paul Boudet, Paul Cravath, Kent Davis and Solang Uk. This new version also includes the French text of *Eaux et Lumières* published in 1931 by the Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales in Paris, a useful feature since extant copies are now mostly consigned to the 'rare' books section at libraries around the world. Select chapters of *Water and Light* were also published in French in the review *Terre et mer – la géographie*, from September to November 1931. This special colour edition was inspired by, and prepared under the guidance of, Nicole Groslier Rea, Groslier's eldest child, who passed away on 15 February 2015, aged 97. She is pictured with her doting father on p. VI of the book, at the front gate of their Phnom Penh home in 1923.

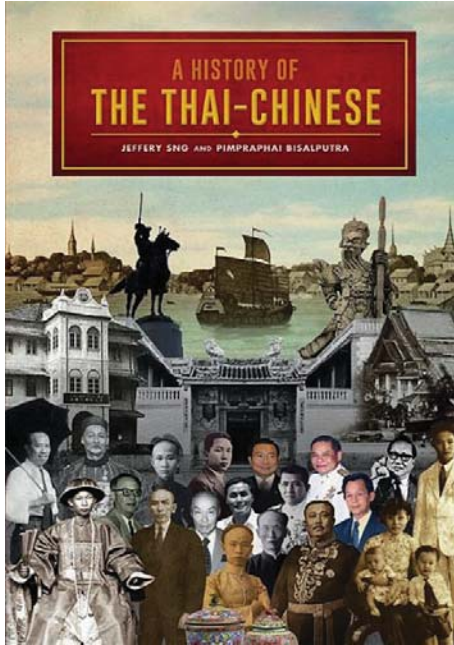
Lia Genovese

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<sup>1</sup> Doudart de Lagrée died in Yunnan in March 1868. Captain A.B. de Villemereuil, expedition member, edited and published his detailed travel diary.

*A History of the Thai-Chinese* by Jeffery Sng and Pimpraphai Bisalputra (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2015.) ISBN: 978-981-4385-77-0. Bt1,295 / US\$39.00.



Despite numerous research data, supported by various governments and academic institutions, that at least up to the conclusion of the Second World War, Thailand was home to the largest ethnic Chinese population outside of the Chinese mainland, academic publications concerning the Chinese community in Thailand appear to be among the rarest in comparison with her ASEAN neighbors. It is indeed quite depressing to admit that, until very recently, nothing has been done that could even be considered at a comparable level to G. William Skinner's classic masterpiece, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*, published nearly six decades ago, in 1957. Some even suggested that such a work could not be done for a whole host of reasons: because the Chinese have become so assimilated; because the Chinese in Thailand were, and remain, very

closely intertwined with the kingdom's ruling powers—including royalty, military, as well as the major political parties; or, because the situation in Thailand is just so unique that it is impossible to relate the history of the Chinese in Thailand with that of any of her neighbors.

*A History of the Thai-Chinese* by Jeffery Sng and Pimpraphai Bisalputra is awe-inspiring. This is a work that, at long last, has surpassed Skinner's *Chinese Society in Thailand* and has done so in a way that has opened a new horizon for the entire field of Chinese diaspora studies in Thailand. There are a few important innovative perspectives that the authors have employed in accomplishing this academic feat that are worth mentioning within the very limited space permissible.

First, and perhaps most daring, is the huge historical time span covered in this single-volume publication—from 14th century Ayutthaya to the present day. At first glance, one may think that the authors are simply following in the grand Skinnerian tradition, considering the fact that *Chinese Society in Thailand* goes back even further, to the Sukhothai period sometime in the 13th century. A big difference—that gives *A History of the Thai-Chinese* a significant advantage—is the fact that Bisalputra is one of the leading names in the history of the Ayutthaya period. Combined with Jeffery Sng's profound knowledge of and adept insight into Thai modern political history, the duo are able to create a masterpiece which transcends the traditional modern/pre-modern divide in historical periodization. Thus, readers can observe an almost flawless logic and teleological continuation from the history of the Thai-Chinese in the Ayutthaya era all the way up to the present day. The 14th century was included not simply as 'background



information,' but as an essential starting point of the complex rhyme and reason of the 600-odd years of Thai-Chinese history presented in the book.

The authors' attempt to shy away from the traditional 'impact-response' narrative, which tends to view the East as static and to recognize all forces of change as being driven by modernizing agents from the West, is not only noble, but enormously necessary for developing a more progressive and realistic perspective for the field of history in this area of the world. Of all histories, the history of the Thai-Chinese should not fall back into the imperialist fallacy that divides all forms of temporality in Asia into times before and after colonial modernization. For that matter, even from the perspective of local Thai historians, the history of the Chinese in Thailand should not even be narrated according to the dynastic divide of the late 18th century. This is because there is, and remains, a crucial continuation through family businesses and the extensive network of dialect and hometown associations of the Chinese across the South China Sea from the earliest days of Ayutthaya to the modern era.

Another novel aspect of *A History of the Thai-Chinese* lies in the fact that the authors have managed to amass a great deal of data and documents related to the history of Chinese families, clan associations, secret societies and all sorts of interesting socio-cultural networks of the Chinese in Thailand throughout the period under investigation. The history provided is therefore not only from the perspective of the state—which has long monopolized the production of historical records and documents in the field of Thai history—but also provides a complex and comprehensive view from the more personal side of family businesses and community legends.

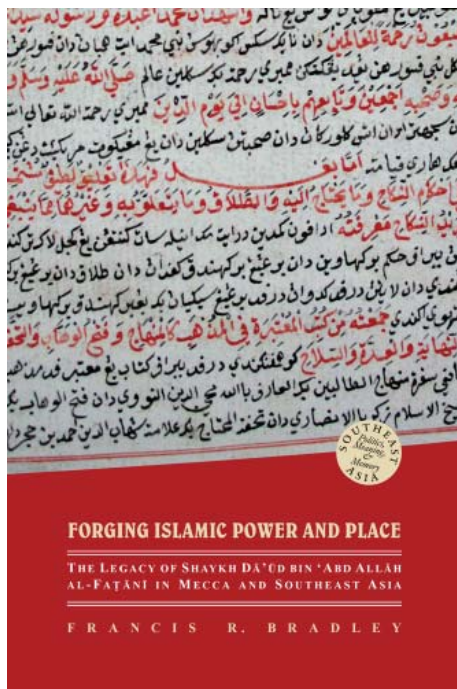
While *A History of the Thai-Chinese* is solidly grounded in rich and rare historical documentation, thanks to Bisalputra's years of research and extensive family network, Sng greatly contributes to the volume through his enlightened transnational perspective on the history of the Chinese diaspora. This book is a rare exception to the tradition of writing the history of the Chinese overseas simply as an extension of either Chinese national history or the national history of the host nation—in this case, Thailand. The authors are well aware of the innate transnational nature of the Chinese in Thailand, and therefore, never attempt to limit the scope of the narrative to the national boundaries in the way that so many other pieces have previously. Perhaps most impressive is the fact that the book does not shy away from numerous controversies, and difficult political matters concerning the Chinese in Thai politics, especially in the modern period. Despite the tumultuous political atmosphere that has engulfed Thailand for the past decade, Sng and Bisalputra have managed to demonstrate that it is not impossible to discuss and analyze such sensitive matters in the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.

*A History of the Thai-Chinese* has managed to cross many thresholds and broken many boundaries. It is a study that bridges major divides in historical periodization—both dynastic divides from the Thai tradition and the modern/pre-modern divide in the grander scheme of Orientalist historical narrative. It investigates and recounts the history of the Chinese in Thailand from a truly transnational perspective—not minimizing diaspora history as simply an extension of national history. Perhaps most importantly, this tome has managed to break the monopoly of the state's perspective on the history of a transnational minority community by diversifying historical sources to include

important aspects from family and business histories as well. In short, the authors have succeeded in revolutionizing the history of the Chinese in Thailand. At long last, a new classic to match Skinner's *Chinese Society in Thailand* has arrived!

Wasana Wongsurawat

*Forging Islamic Power and Place: The Legacy of Shaykh Da'ud bin 'Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia* by Francis R. Bradley (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-8248-5161-3. US\$54.00



Patani Malay nationalism, like most nationalisms, holds certain things sacred: the Patani Malay language (including its written form, *Jawi*, or Malay written in a modified Arabic script), the memory of a glorious sultanate, its Islamic tradition with its *pondok* system of religious education, its many historical defeats at the hands of the Thai kingdom, its famous Kresik mosque, and its great historical personages. Of these, few are more renowned among Patani Malays than the prolific Islamic scholar, Shaykh Da'ud al-Fatani (1769-1847). Indeed, Shaykh Da'ud's reputation extends beyond Patani, which contributes to his popularity; his works are well known to Southeast Asian Muslim scholars. While scholars of Patani's history and its Islamic tradition duly mention the significance of Shaykh Da'ud and the "Patani school" of Islamic scholarship he helped found, very few

have actually closely examined this corpus of written work. Part of this oversight can be put down to the comparatively undeveloped state of studies of Patani, but part of the reason is that most of these writings have yet to be published and can only be accessed in manuscript form in the original *Jawi* script. It has taken an American scholar, Francis Bradley, to delve into this rich tradition of Patani Islamic scholarship and present the fullest account of Shaykh Da'ud's life, work and legacy that has yet been written.

Bradley has made the astonishing discovery of the existence of 1300 *Jawi* manuscripts produced by scholars of the former Patani sultanate, on such diverse topics as law, prayer, mysticism, poetry, Arabic grammar, Malay translations of Arabic literature and Patani Malay oral tradition (pp. 2-3). The manuscripts were found in libraries in Malaysia, the Netherlands, London, the United States and South Africa. According to Bradley, this represents "one of the largest collections ever assembled in the region",

rivalled only by the manuscript tradition of Java. What is even more astonishing is that this corpus of Islamic scholarship has received “virtually no attention” in the existing academic literature (p. 3). As a result, Patani’s contribution to Southeast Asian Islam has been “largely ignored” (p. 4).

*Forging Islamic Power and Place: the Legacy of Shaykh Da’ud bin ‘Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia* seeks to rectify this situation. It places Shaykh Da’ud and the Patani school of Islamic scholarship into a regional historical context. It demonstrates the importance of Patani’s intellectual contribution to Southeast Asian Islam in the 18th and 19th centuries. More importantly – and here is another aspect of the novelty of this book – Bradley argues that the emergence of this rich Islamic scholarly tradition was a direct result of the “Patani-Siam” wars of this period, which ended Patani’s existence as an independent sultanate and created a scholarly diaspora that sought to keep alive the essence of the Patani community through the production of religious scholarship.

The book is organized chronologically, beginning with the “golden age” of the Patani sultanate as a prosperous trading state during the 16th and 17th centuries, and the respective roles of the merchant class (*orang kaya*), the palace and Islamic scholars. It goes on to show how Patani’s declining status as a trading centre resulted in a downturn in its economic fortunes that eventually led to political in-fighting within the palace. This political disunity was partly responsible for the sultanate’s devastating defeat by a Thai army in 1786, followed by a series of subsequent defeats, which by the 1830s had led not only to a loss of independence, but also to the “withering away” of the social hierarchy centred around the royal court. Bradley gives a particularly vivid account of the violence and brutality of the Siamese invasion and destruction of Patani, the cruel treatment of Patani’s inhabitants and the enslavement of a substantial part of the population.

Patani’s destruction as an independent sultanate is crucial to Bradley’s argument. The wars with Siam led to the displacement of a large part of Patani’s population. Among those displaced were a small number of Islamic scholars, who proceeded to travel to Mecca, then the centre of global Islamic scholarship, where they joined Malay-speaking Muslims from other parts of Southeast Asia, the so-called *Jawah*. One of these figures was Shaykh Da’ud, whose career and work forms the core of the book. In the late 1780s, soon after the Siamese invasion and sacking of Patani, Shaykh Da’ud fled to Mecca where he spent most of the rest of his life. By the early 19th century, Shaykh Da’ud had become the “leading figure in the Malay-speaking community” in Mecca (p. 100). Bradley argues that the subsequent flourishing of Patani Islamic scholarship in Mecca should be understood as an attempt to construct a “revitalized moral order” based on Islamic teachings in the wake of the sultanate’s destruction by Thai forces. Over the course of his long career, Shaykh Da’ud wrote prolifically on such subjects as Islamic jurisprudence, eschatology, the “tenets of the faith”, pedagogy, and Sufism (pp. 74-99). He is also known as one of the foremost translators of Arabic works into Malay, enriching the corpus of Malay-language Islamic scholarship and thus enabling the dissemination of textual Islam beyond the small community of scholars literate in Arabic, to the broader Malay community.

Shaykh Da'ud was also a gifted teacher, and students from all over the Malay peninsula, Sumatra, and even as far away as Borneo, studied with him in Mecca (pp. 100-103). Bradley describes how his legacy continued through his students and, importantly, through Patani's famous *pondok* Islamic schools, which sought to reproduce the Mecca model of Islamic learning. This contributed to the formation of what Bradley calls an Islamic "knowledge network" (pp. 100-18), centred on the Patani scholarly community in Mecca, and which included Patani, Sumatra, Cambodia, Bangkok, and even the Malay community in South Africa. Bradley continues the now quite common tradition in recent scholarship on Southeast Asian Islam, pioneered by scholars such as Azra, Laffan and Ricci, in highlighting the lineages of Islamic scholars, the books they wrote, the schools they founded, the students they taught, and the schools their students founded. While mapping out these networks does not always make the most scintillating reading, such work does give empirical substance to the often casually used concept of "network". Here, Bradley could have gone further and proposed, using the late Benedict Anderson's famous argument, that this "knowledge network" of scholars who moved in the same circles, used the same written language, and read the same texts, was the genesis of Patani's "imagined community". This might additionally help explain the heavy religious element present in Patani nationalism by comparison with the more common secular nationalisms that emerged in the European colonial states of Southeast Asia. Bradley has a point in the Introduction to the book where he criticizes the preoccupation of much scholarly work on Patani with nationalist themes, while the trove of Islamic scholarship he has discovered has hardly been touched. But this book, in fact, contributes to a better understanding of the nature of Patani nationalism.

The book is written in a sympathetic vein. Bradley demonstrates an admiration for the enormous scholarly legacy of Shaykh Da'ud and the Patani school, at least partly due to the difficult circumstances in which it was produced: this was the product of a defeated, diasporic community.

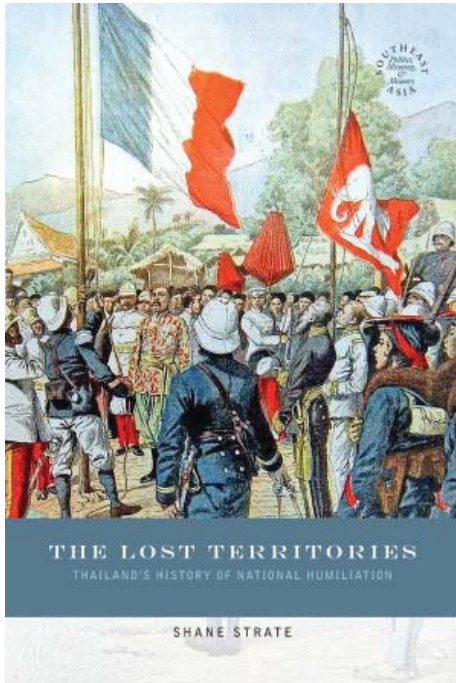
Although it is not explicitly argued in this book, Bradley's work helps explain a phenomenon that can be seen elsewhere in the Muslim world: the rise of "Islamist politics", which since the 1980s, has also reshaped Patani resistance movements against the Thai state. The elimination of the pre-existing Patani elite (earlier the "*orang kaya*" and the political elite centred on the royal palace, and in the modern era subsequent political leaders) as a result of Thai colonial depredations and, more recently, military repression, has left a political, economic and moral leadership vacuum within Patani society which the Thai regime has not succeeded in replacing. Instead, this leadership vacuum has been filled by Islamic leaders, institutions and Islamic discourse. This is a direct legacy of Shaykh Da'ud and the Patani school.

This is an important book. It will stake a claim for the significance of Patani Islamic scholarship in the context of the Southeast Asian Islamic tradition. Although it is not necessarily the intention of the author, as the discovery of this rich tradition of Islamic scholarship becomes better known, it cannot but help strengthen the claims of the people of Patani for recognition by the Thai state as a people with a distinct and separate national tradition.

Patrick Jory



*The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation* by Shane Strate (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-8248-3891-1 (hard). US\$52.



As every Thai knows, and any foreign visitor to the kingdom quickly learns if they did not already, Thailand, or Siam as it was called until 1939, was never colonized by a Western imperial power. In the conventional historical narrative, the preservation of the country's independence is usually attributed to the skilful diplomacy and modernizing reforms of King Mongkut (r.1851-1868) and King Chulalongkorn (r.1868-1910). But there is a darker side to this triumphant story of continual independence: Siam's survival comes at a high price as it is forced, first, to sign unequal treaties with the Western powers that limit its fiscal and judicial sovereignty, and, second, to cede parts of what are now Cambodia and Laos to the French, and Malaysia and Myanmar to the British. Although never formally colonized, Thailand was thus still a victim of Western imperialism. It is this narrative of loss and suffering that forms the

focus of Shane Strate's *The Lost Territories*.

In this insightful and highly readable study, which is based upon his PhD dissertation from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Strate explores the origins of what he terms 'National Humiliation discourse' and its relationship with the predominant Royalist-Nationalist strand in conventional historiography. Both of these narratives were born from the same event: namely, the 1893 Franco-Siamese Crisis in which the French used gunboat diplomacy to force the Siamese government to surrender its claims over the Lao tributary states on the left bank of the Mekong River. From the Royalist-Nationalist viewpoint, this concession was a classic example of the kingdom's 'bamboo diplomacy', with Chulalongkorn wisely bending to the wishes of the French in order to stop them colonizing all of Siam. Drawing on the work of Thongchai Winichakul, Strate shows how the still passionately held belief that Siam was robbed of its former territories is based upon anachronistically projecting the modern concept of nation-states exercising exclusive sovereignty over specific territories demarcated by borders into a Southeast Asian past of hierarchical overlord-tributary interstate relations and frontiers of overlapping sovereignty. This ahistorical sleight-of-hand is necessary to turn what was actually a humiliating defeat in 1893—that might have tarnished Chulalongkorn's reputation—into a diplomatic victory that ensured Siam's survival and saw the monarchy enshrined as the nation's guardians. As Strate illustrates, however, the sense of humiliation and victimization by the West has never been entirely erased. Indeed,

the Thai state and other political actors have frequently used these feelings to foster national unity, mobilize support for authoritarian rule and suppress dissent. Rather than celebrate the country's continuous independence à la the Royalist-Nationalist narrative, National Humiliation discourse maintains that Thailand is under constant threat from both external and internal enemies: if Thai people do not unify under strong leadership, then further suffering and loss will result. As a recent example, Strate highlights how politicians used this discourse in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis to portray the demands of the IMF as illegitimate. Today, traces of it can be seen in the belief of the military government and its supporters that Western-style democracy and its proponents represent an existential threat to the Thai nation.

The core of *The Lost Territories* focuses on the 1930s and 1940s, particularly Thailand's role in the Second World War under the military regime of Luang Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944). Strate uses the development of National Humiliation discourse and its relationship with Royalist-Nationalism as a compelling analytical framework to shed new light on the policies and foreign relations of both the Phibun government and those of its post-war successor. In the late 1930s, Phibun sought to legitimize his increasingly authoritarian control and discredit the monarchy he had helped depose from power in 1932 by stirring up memories of the 1893 crisis. Government propaganda cast this confrontation with France as a defeat and a blow to national prestige: only the military could protect the Thai nation from further such humiliations and right the historic wrongs suffered at the hands of the Western imperial powers. This rhetoric was remarkably successful in generating popular support for the Thai military's invasion of French Indochina in January 1941, which ended with Thailand gaining possession of parts of Laos and Cambodia.

Strate goes on to show how the Phibun regime also used National Humiliation discourse both to explain the country's subsequent occupation by the Japanese and to justify its declaration of war against Great Britain and the United States in January 1942. By highlighting how all of Asia, including Japan, had suffered from Western imperialism to some extent, the government managed to link the discourse of National Humiliation with the Japanese ideology of Pan-Asianism. Rather than being occupied by Japan, Thailand was its junior partner in helping liberate its less fortunate colonized neighbours. Strate argues that National Humiliation discourse thereby enabled the Phibun regime to disguise its aims of (re)creating a great Thai empire across mainland Southeast Asia, evidenced by the Thai military's occupation of the Shan States in British Burma in 1942, as an anti-colonial liberation struggle.

Come the end of the Second World War, Thailand found itself on the wrong side, with both Britain and France wanting to punish the kingdom for its aggressive actions. Moreover, France insisted that if Thailand did not return the Lao and Cambodian provinces it had seized in 1941, it would block the country's application for membership of the UN. This placed the government of Pridi Banomyong, which had replaced that of the tainted Phibun, in a difficult position: the intense emotional attachment to the lost territories meant returning them to France would seriously affect its legitimacy. Therefore, the Pridi government revived the Royalist-Nationalist narrative of sacrifice and survival to justify its decision to give in to the French demands: returning the Lao

and Cambodian territories was necessary to make amends for Phibun's mistakes and illustrate its commitment to the UN and international peace. Nevertheless, the wound of the lost territories was left open as France's heavy-handed approach allowed the Thais to recast themselves as a peaceful nation that had been the victim of Western bullying once more.

For this reviewer, the most interesting part of the book is the examination of a little known aspect of the wartime period: specifically, the Phibun regime's persecution of Thai Catholics as fifth columnists because of their suspected sympathy with France. Strate traces the roots of this anti-Catholicism to the late 19th century, when French priests used extraterritoriality to protect their congregations and converts from the taxation and corvée labour demands of the Siamese authorities. The Phibun government's propaganda was thus able to link Catholicism with French imperialism, portraying the religion as a foreign ideology that threatened Thai values. To be Catholic was to be un-Thai. The government's anti-Catholic policies involved pressurizing Thai Catholics into converting to Buddhism and seizing Church property. Tragically, this resulted in state-supported vigilante violence in which several Thai Catholics were murdered and churches were burnt down. This episode serves as a powerful warning about what happens when governments incite religious intolerance for political ends. It also has some uncomfortable parallels with the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment within the Thai Buddhist monkhood in the present day.

In the final part of the book, Strate examines the historical origins of the long-running dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the Preah Vihear temple ruins on the two countries' mutual border. During the 1930s, the temple became a key symbol of the lost territories and was part of those areas temporarily seized by the military in the war. In the 1950s, the Thai government under a rehabilitated Phibun tried to bully newly independent Cambodia into surrendering Preah Vihear, with the military illegally occupying the ruins. These aggressive tactics backfired, however, when the Cambodian government decided to bring the international community in to resolve the dispute by appealing to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1958. Thai newspapers then revived the rhetoric of National Humiliation in order to build up public support and donations for the Thai legal case; linking the issue to French imperialism by depicting the leader and former king of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, as a stooge of the French and by even claiming that Cambodia was just a French colonial construct that had once been part of Siam. Similarly, when the ICJ ruled that Preah Vihear belonged to Cambodia in 1962, the military regime of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat explained this setback by accusing the ICJ of being a neo-imperialist institution of the Communist powers, the latest mortal threat to the Thai nation. Nearly fifty years later, the lack of emotional closure over the temple enabled the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) to mobilize support for its protests against the Thaksin-backed People Power Party after that government agreed to endorse Cambodia's application to have Preah Vihear listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

As is to be expected for a work based on a PhD dissertation, *The Lost Territories* relies on extensive archival records such as government reports, speeches and newspaper articles. In his examination of the anti-Catholic episode during the Second World War,

Strate also uses the unpublished and previously unutilized eyewitness accounts of Thai Catholics from the Assumption Cathedral archives. The book also contains several political cartoons that provide graphic evidence of the National Humiliation discourse at work.

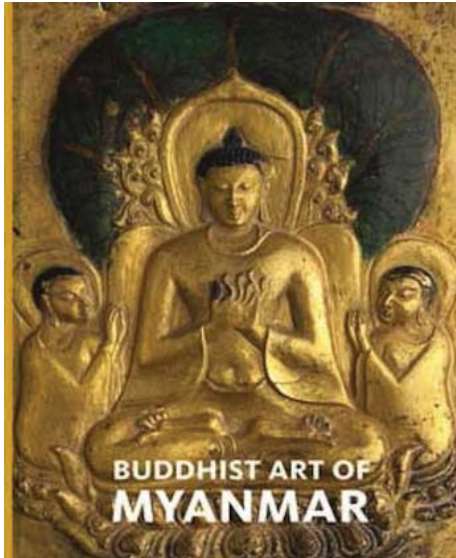
Taken as a whole, *The Lost Territories* raises some important questions, particularly about the relationship between the Thai media and public opinion. Rather than merely reflecting the public mood, Strate highlights how the Thai media has often been responsible for manufacturing public outrage and generating popular support for government policies. Just as significantly, the book builds on recent scholarship on Thailand that challenges the 'colonized' versus 'non-colonized' or 'colonizing' binary classifications used to describe Western and non-Western states. In this respect, Strate demonstrates how National Humiliation discourse has allowed Thai governments and other political actors to use 'un-colonized' Siam/Thailand's victimization by the West to disguise their own neo-colonial ambitions over neighbouring states. What is also clear is that the rhetoric of the lost territories is not going to disappear from Thai political discourse anytime soon. Commenting on how the various maps showing the lost territories issued by the Phibun regime often differed over what those territories actually were, Strate explains that: 'The *lost territories* were not a location. They functioned as a symbol, a monument commemorating the idea of a National Humiliation. Since the meaning of the symbol proved remarkably flexible, it could also be continually reinterpreted and used by later generations to meet contemporary needs' (p. 45).

In sum, *The Lost Territories* is an important addition to the historiography on modern Thailand and essential reading for those wishing to understand the origins of the Preah Vihear dispute. More broadly, it will be of interest to anyone interested in how governments and other political actors manipulate historical memory to mobilize popular support.

James A. Warren



*Buddhist Art of Myanmar* edited by Sylvia Fraser-Lu and Donald M. Stadtner (New York: Asia Society and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). ISBN 978 0 300 20945 7. US\$65.00



This book was published to accompany an exhibition at the Asia Society Museum in 2015. Nine scholarly essays occupy eighty-eight pages, with a catalogue of 139 pages. Of seventy-one artifacts in the catalogue, thirty-one were loaned by the National Museums of Myanmar (13), the Sri Ksetra Archaeological Museum (7), the Bagan Archaeological Museum (9), and the Kaba Aye Buddhist Art Museum (2). Ten American institutions and individuals loaned the remainder. Most of the items from Myanmar date from the Classical period; most of the American items date from the 17th to the 20th century.

The essays average seven pages in length, of which an appreciable proportion is occupied by photographs. Within these restrictions, the authors did an admirable job of distilling Myanmar history. The editors Sylvia Fraser-Lu and Donald Stadtner summarize the history of the Archaeological Survey of Burma, founded in 1902, the Burma Research Society, important foreign collections of Myanmar art, and the progress of archaeology since independence in 1948. The next chapter, on foundation myths of Myanmar by Patrick Pranke and Donald Stadtner, describes the links between legends of Bagan, Inwa, Bago, Raikhine, Shan, and important sites in the country. The next chapter by U Tun Aung Chain complements those beliefs with a summary of Myanmar primary sources, including ancient inscriptions and more recent chronicles. Patrick Pranke provides a summary of Burmese Buddhism, which provides the necessary context for most of the works of art which constitute the main subject of this book. Jacques Leider's essay counteracts the view that Myanmar's main contacts with its neighbors consisted of Indian immigration and warfare with Thailand. Although Myanmar shares borders with India, China, and Thailand, Myanmar's main contact with them occurred in the context of trade. The wars with Ayutthaya in the 18th century may have been incited in part by trading disputes.

Art historians Robert Brown and Donald Stadtner contribute a chapter on the earliest Buddhist art of Myanmar, mainly that associated with the Sri Ksetra site, identified with a culture known as Pyu. The catalogue section begins with ten art works found at Sri Ksetra, a site associated with Pyu culture. The oldest item, a double-sided stele found at Sri Ksetra, is dated in the catalogue to the 4th to the 6th century. Pamela Gutman and Bob Hudson in the *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (2014) argued for a date as early as the 1st century. Several items in this section were discovered within the last decade, including a Mettaya and a *vajraghanta* which add significantly to our

knowledge of the mixture of Theravada and esoteric Buddhist beliefs in early Myanmar. This chapter also summarizes what is known about the early art of lower Myanmar and Rakhine (Arakan) where an early 8th century inscription records that a king patronized both Buddhist and Hindu monasteries.

The important site of Bagan is represented by thirteen items from Myanmar museums. Three items in the catalogue from American collections may also have come from Bagan. The origin and date of another item, a mold for votive tablets, are uncertain, but it is believed to have been made during the Bagan period or earlier. Donald M. Stadtner, in 'Ancient Bagan: a plain of merit', summarizes the development of the art of Bagan during its florescent period during the 11th through 13th centuries, and the various theories which have been proposed to account for the evolution of its architecture, sculpture, and mural painting.

The number of Bagan's residents has not been ascertained. Little research has been devoted to the study of remains of daily life at the site. One important clue is the record of the period of time needed to build some of the major monuments. The largest stupa in Bagan, Dhammayazika, for instance, was recorded in inscriptions as having been built in only two years (p. 62), suggesting that a large workforce was available.

Bagan's role as a political capital came to an end in the 14th century, but the site continued to be relevant to Myanmar society and politics. Later chronicles purport to record events and situations during the Bagan period, and the patronage of later kings. Out of the seventy-one items featured in the catalogue, the majority (44) date from the post-Bagan era. Three chapters of the book deal with this phase.

Sylvia Fraser-Lu covers the period from 1287 to 1900. She denotes the 465 years from 1287 to 1752 in Upper Myanmar the 'Ava-Taunggu Period', since the center of political power and artistic patronage was located at Ava (Inwa in modern orthography) near Mandalay during most of this time. The later part of this era is represented by seven Buddha images, two in a distinctive style with enormous crowns or head-dresses, possibly related to a tradition about a vainglorious ruler named Jambupati whom Buddha converted by appearing in the form of a world ruler.

At the head of the Ayeyarwadi river between 1369 and 1537, including glazed plaques, three of which are shown in the catalogue. Mrauk-U in Rakhine produced major works of architecture and sculpture, represented in the catalogue by a single small bronze Buddha.

The early Konbaung period which began in 1752 is represented by a glazed tile from Mingun, across the river from Mandalay, where the famous Mingun Bell still rests. Myanmar was progressively annexed by the British between 1826 and 1885, when the Konbaung Dynasty came to an end, and court artists had to turn their skills to other ends. Some sculpture of this period in the catalogue is almost heart-rendingly beautiful. The last item in the catalogue is a covered box decorated all over with a depiction of the *Vessantara jātaka*. The photographs in the catalogue are excellent; the box is so interesting that one wishes that photographs of all sides of the box including close-ups had been included.

The last two chapters deal with general topics. Adriana Proser ingeniously uses the biological concept of the 'meme' to explain why the production of certain Buddhist

images has waxed and waned in Myanmar. Heidi Tan discusses the various semi-didactic situations where Buddha images are found in Myanmar, such as the collections of assorted objects exhibited at pagoda complexes which combine images of Buddha with a wide range of other artifacts, the Archaeology Museum and other ancient sites in Bagan, and the National Museum in Yangon.

This book contains essays and a catalogue condensing a large proportion of the gamut of Myanmar art history. It is a necessary reference for any general reader interested in acquiring familiarity with the broad scope of Myanmar art, and can be read with enjoyment by the advanced student of the field.

John N. Miksic

*The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* by Teddy Spha Palasthira (Bangkok: Post Books, 2015). ISBN 978-974-228-285-1. 400 Baht.



Subject and style set *The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* apart. The subject is the Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh, who under various aliases spent much of 1928 and 1929 living in the northeast of Siam recruiting allies among the “Viet-Kieu”, the Vietnamese minority who settled there as the French moved into Vietnam in the late 19th century. As such, the book is a straightforward biography about a mysterious period of Ho’s life. To find out “the facts” during this period, Palasthira does the ordinary detective work of the historian: consulting primary and secondary sources, as well as revisiting the known sites of Ho’s time in Bangkok and, most particularly, in the northeast.

But such historical method has limitations for writing a biography of Ho in Siam, which is why none of his many biographers devoted more than about four pages to his Siamese sojourn. This is largely because before, during, and after his time in Siam, Ho was on the run from the French secret police (*Sûreté*) who sought Vietnamese rebels like Ho, who took refuge just across the border from their French Indochinese colony. In this context, Ho became a chameleon, changing identities, names, costumes, and donning disguises that make it difficult for historians to trace by conventional means. Nevertheless, from what Ho later told his official biographers, it was in Siam that he first became a master of the jungle lore which he later used as the basis for the guerilla wars in Vietnam against the Japanese, French, and Americans.

Thus, what remains for the historian about the time Ho was in Thailand are just bits and pieces. He appeared in different guises (local medicine man, Chinese businessman, and even as a Buddhist monk), changed names, and purposefully obscured his movements. Ho was known to appear and disappear rapidly, like a mole. But what happened in-between? To address this mystery, Palasthira artfully shifts mid-point in his book from historian (just the facts!) to novelist. The second half of the book is a fictionalized account about one of Ho's Thai recruits, Wong, who is the son of a Vietnamese émigré and Thai mother living in Phichit.

In Vietnam, Wong's father had a failed first marriage in which his wife betrayed him with a French military officer. Despite his father's protests, Wong's Thai mother made sure that Wong learned to speak Vietnamese. With a bilingual background, Wong in 1928 surreptitiously joined the expedition of "Thau Chin" in Thailand at the age of seventeen. As a guide and interpreter for the Viet Minh rebels he accompanied the man who will become Ho Chi Minh, falling for Ho's charisma and revolutionary fervor. Wong led Ho on an arduous 500-kilometer trip through the mountains of the northeast between Phichit and Udon Thani, rugged areas which, ironically enough, would later be held by the Communist Party of Thailand during the late 1970s. Ho made the trip in two weeks—a strategy that "defeated geography" by making improbable journeys on foot. This strategy later benefited the Viet Minh when conducting raids on the French in the 1940s, at the battle of Dien Bieh Phu in 1954, and in the 1960s-1970s during the war against the Americans. "Thau Chin", the man who became Ho Chi Minh, developed this strategy in Siam: suddenly appearing at organizing meetings under one name, disappearing into another disguise before reappearing at the next.

His time in Thailand finished, Ho commanded his new disciple Wong to educate himself—a task Wong undertook as Thailand modernized quickly in the 1930s. A brief period of democratic rule in Thailand was quickly followed by the dictatorship of Luang Pibulsongram, the Japanese Occupation, and the emergence of the underground "Free Thai" movement which challenged the Japanese. Palasthira in this context uses his Viet Kieu character Wong to describe the rise of Thai nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s in which the Vietnamese minority came to be seen as a threat to Thai identity, particularly in the context of the uneasy role that Thailand had with neighboring French Indochina. This in turn sets the stage for the last part of the novel, which is about Wong's trip to Vietnam to fight as a volunteer with the Viet Minh under Ho Chi Minh between roughly 1944 and 1947.

Palasthira describes well the cruelty of French and Japanese colonialism with their racial segregation and the violent nature of colonial rule. In this context Wong is sent by Ho to survey the Tai-speaking villagers of Vietnam, whom Ho sought to incorporate into his revolt against the Japanese occupation. Wong then observes the surrender of the Japanese forces to the Viet Minh, after which Ho briefly establishing an independent Vietnam in 1945, followed by re-occupation by the French military. Wong becomes an intelligence officer for Ho during the subsequent revolt against the French immediately following the end of the Second World War.

In the end, Wong grows weary of all war and the cruelties he both witnesses and commits. Worn out by his time in Vietnam, he returns to his mother in Phichit, and quietly



enters academia as a lecturer in anthropology and Thai linguistics at Chulalongkorn University. From the perspective of Wong, Palasthira then presents the rest of Ho's story, including the Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the outbreak of the American War in the 1960s, and finally the emergence of an independent Vietnam which Wong visits as an old man in 1987.

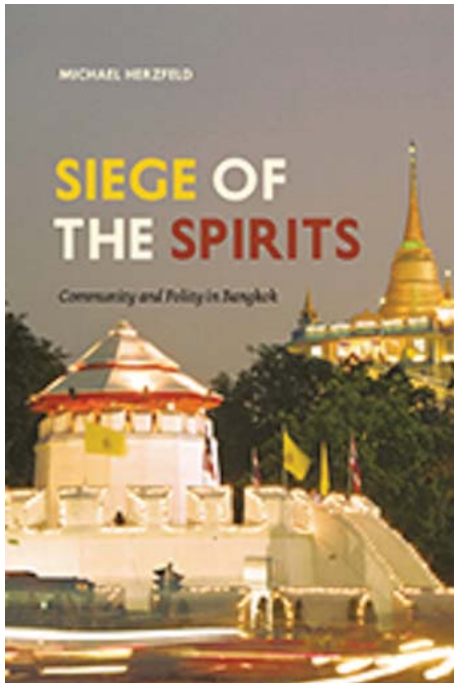
In "Wong", Palasthira creates an engaging character that describes the role of the Viet Kieu in Thailand. Much of what Palasthira writes about the Viet Kieu is interesting for its own sake, both in the more "historical" part of the book, as well as the novelized second part. Wong himself is an interesting case study for his engagement with Ho Chi Minh. But the backstory about Thailand's ongoing relationship with Vietnam before, during, and after the Cold War is also interesting. By the end of the book, Wong is more than a heuristic device to develop Ho's story, though he is that. Wong also becomes a literary device to describe Thailand's ongoing relationship with Vietnam, and its Vietnamese minority. In this sense, the book is also an exploration of "Thai-ness".

My criticism of *The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* is that the novelized story of Wong at 136 pages is not long enough. Because the character is indeed sympathetic, I wondered about Wong's broader story. For example, I would like to read more about his experiences among the Tai people of northern Vietnam in 1945. But perhaps most lacking is Wong's account of the Thai history through which he lived, particularly after he returned from Vietnam in 1947. What did he think about Thailand's role in the Vietnam War during the 1970s, and the student uprisings at Thammasat University in the 1970s? What did he think about the withdrawal of the Americans from Thailand in 1976? What did he think when the mountains through which he led Ho in 1928 became a redoubt for the Thai Communist Party in the 1970s?

What makes *The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* effective is its grounding in historical research, much of which is found in the first 178 pages which is the "biography" of Ho's time in Siam. But what makes the book enjoyable is the historical novel focused by Wong. In this sense the book also follows in an important Thai literary tradition that includes Botan's *Letters from Thailand* (Tan Suang U) and Kukrit's *Four Kingdoms* (Mae Ploy). So perhaps in future we can hope for more elaboration from the fertile imagination of Teddy Spha Palasthira.

Tony Waters

*Siege of the Spirits: Community and Polity in Bangkok*, by Michael Herzfeld (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016). ISBN 978-0-226-33158-4 (cloth); ISBN 978-0-226-33161-4 (paper); ISBN 978-0-226-33175-1 (e-book). Cloth US\$90.00; Paper US\$30.00; E-book US\$10.00 to US\$30.00.



At a Thai Studies conference in 2002, Michael Herzfeld, professor of anthropology at Harvard University, announced a new interest in Thailand. Herzfeld had been a key figure in developing approaches to anthropology, which moved beyond structural functionalism without plunging into postmodernism. His research in Greece, and elsewhere in southern Europe, had focused on tensions between communities and bureaucracies, especially in relation to heritage in the context of tourism, most famously in the elegantly titled book, *A Place in History*.

A year later, while trawling for research sites among the communities threatened with eviction under plans to develop the historical centre of Bangkok, Herzfeld did not really *choose* his research site; rather the site chose him—the embattled residents of the Mahakan Fort community astutely recognised the potential value of a Harvard professor. Over a dozen years later, this book is the result. It traces the extraordinary story of the community’s protest, and offers many subtle insights on the relations between the state and people in contemporary Thailand.

The Mahakan Fort community, along with many others, was threatened by a development plan with two main aims: to clarify the old centre on Rattanakosin Island as an essentially royal space; and to improve its attraction to tourists by developing its “beauty.” The Mahakan Fort Community, clustered against the city’s original wall, was to be replaced by a park that would improve the vista of the old fort and its environs. Opposing this project was tricky on many grounds: the redevelopment project could claim to be serving modernity, monarchy, and the tourist income so important for national prosperity. Moreover, the Mahakan Fort community is tiny. The site is only five *rai*, and the population hovers around 300 people. Most are genuinely poor, hence the resources available for mounting resistance are scant.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) gained an early advantage by taking ownership of the land under the law of eminent domain, and paying many of the community’s members a first instalment on compensation for eviction. On legal grounds, the community does not have a foot to stand on, and the courts have consistently ruled against its petitions to stay. Yet, a quarter of a century after the first attempts to remove the community, it is still there. The community has been fighting in the public space of the media, and in the knuckle-to-knuckle space of confrontation and negotiation with

the bureaucracy. Herzfeld concentrates on the latter.

He describes these scenes of negotiation in great detail, analysing the body language, the vocabularies deployed, the use of aggression, deference, contempt and humour. He discusses the politics and poetics of sound amplification.

The BMA argued that the Mahakan Fort residents had no legitimacy as a historic community. The area had been occupied as residences since the Third Reign, but had no association with a valuable craft or a prominent family. There are records of performances of the traditional musical drama, *like*, there in the late 19th century, but that is hardly unique. Few of the residents can claim a long historical association with the site, and many have arrived recently, from Isan among other places. However, the BMA's plans for redeveloping the site were vulnerable. They intended to replace the community with a park, to remove the people in order to create an empty space. In one fractious confrontation, they sent in soldiers who tore down a row of houses. In another, they dumped truckloads of garbage over an area that the community members were developing as a garden. The BMA commandeered part of the area and planted a lawn, which quickly became an eyesore.

In face of the BMA's aggression, the community gradually redefined itself as "a community of ancient wooden houses," highlighting their rare physical asset. They argued that the diversity of their members' origins made the community a microcosm of the nation. They claimed a role for themselves as curators of this unique location, as guardians of the legacy of the ancestors who occupied the many spirit houses on the site (thus giving Herzfeld his delightful book title). By this deft manipulation of discourse, they repositioned the BMA bureaucrats as threats to Thai heritage, lacking in compassion and cultural sensitivity, and hence unworthy of being Thai. Moreover, while the residents had varied backgrounds and many internal disagreements, under the pressure exerted by the BMA they developed into a community with a robust organisation, strong leadership and extraordinary tenacity.

In many respects, the Mahakan Fort community has followed a pattern seen in other protests over the last three decades. Faced by authorities claiming to act on behalf of nation, modernity, monarchy and progress, the protesters imitate the authorities' vocabulary, techniques, claims and practices. The Mahakan Fort site now has its own museum, signage which closely copies the official signage at tourist sites, and a hierarchical internal organization which can be every bit as authoritarian as the bureaucrats.

How has the Mahakan Fort community survived repeated threat of eviction for almost a quarter of a century, where many other communities have failed, either disintegrating in the face of pressure or surrendering from exhaustion? Part of the reason, Herzfeld argues, is because of its central location. The community is built up against a wall and fort built at the origin of the city. It lies next to the point where Rachadamnoen Avenue, the "royal walk" built by King Chulalongkorn, "smashed through" (Herzfeld's term) this wall as part of the modernisation of the city. A few steps away are the museum of King Rama VII and the Crown Property Bureau's museum of Rattanakosin Island. Above looms the Golden Mount, and across the way lies the "metal temple" with King Rama III's statue. In such a location, the community cannot be quietly destroyed by

the bureaucrats without anyone noticing. The community has exploited this centrality to make its protests known by banners hung over the walls, and amplified messages that float out into the streets. The community has attracted many useful or influential sympathisers, including architects, city planners, academics, people within the Crown Property Bureau, and the short-lived head of the BMA, Apirak Kosayodhin.

But there is more to it than centrality. Herzfeld has studied several wrangles over heritage between communities and state in southern Europe, but cannot imagine a case similar to the Mahakan Fort community occurring there. For explanation, he invokes the conceptualisation of Asian states that was popularised in slightly different forms as mandala (Wolters), segmentary state (Stein) or galactic polity (Tambiah, who was Herzfeld's teacher). He suggests that: "Thailand oscillates between its historical antecedent as a 'pulsating galactic polity' and its modern incarnation as a clearly demarcated territorial nation-state." In the pyramidal structure of the bureaucratic nation-state, a small, scruffy community with no legal rights, like that at Mahakan Fort, is at the bottom of the heap. But the mandala/segmentary state/galactic polity works on different principles. The units, whether a neighbourhood, village, city or kingdom, are conceived as moral communities or imagined families. The units are nested inside one another, like concentric circles, rather than arranged in a vertical formation. The same principles operate at different levels of scale, from neighbourhood to kingdom: the kingdom can claim to be a family, and a minute community can claim to be guardians of the principle of 'Thainess'. In Herzfeld's telling, the Fort Mahakan community has learnt how to slip free from the hierarchy of the nation-state and play the politics of the mandala. In every formal battle in the courts of law, they lose. But in face-to-face negotiation, witnessed at some distance by the nation, they win every time. This is a result of "the residents' self-conscious efforts to portray themselves as a microcosm of the country as a whole." They claim to be guarding a little sliver of the national heritage on behalf of the nation.

As this review is written, the community is again back in the news as the threat of eviction has recently resurfaced. On Herzfeld's analysis, they should survive yet again. However, there is one factor that emerges from Herzfeld's telling, although he does not comment on it. This community (and others) has always been most vulnerable when the military is in power, perhaps because the military as an institution, as a result of its characteristic internal culture, is less susceptible to the politics of the mandala.

This book is a delight to read, full of subtle insights and blissfully free of jargon. It contributes to the growing subgenre on the anthropology of protest, while at the same time offering new ways to think about issue of state and people, history and heritage.

Chris Baker



*From Mulberry Leaves to Silk Scrolls: New Approaches to the Study of Asian Manuscript Traditions* edited by Justin Thomas McDaniel and Lynn Ransom (Philadelphia: Schoenberg Institute of Manuscript Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2015). ISBN 978-0-8122-4736-7. US\$ \$49.95. £32.50



This is an exciting time for the study of Asian manuscripts. Many new collections have been found, particularly in China. The dramatic fall in the cost of imaging techniques and computer storage has resulted in thousands of manuscript pages becoming available online. This book is the first in a series of “Studies in Manuscript Culture” from the University of Pennsylvania dedicated to the memory of Lawrence J. Schoenberg, a pioneering software magnate and great collector of manuscripts. As Justin McDaniel notes in his introduction, the book offers “a glimpse of innovations into the study of Asian manuscript traditions.”

The book is divided into three parts. The first, titled “The Art of the Book”, has three show-and-tell essays on outstandingly beautiful manuscripts from Southeast Asia. Hiram Woodward examines the genre of *Tamrā chāng*, Thai manuals on the characteristics of elephants, concentrating on a particular example from the Walters Collection of which Woodward was the curator. Alexandra Green, curator of the Southeast Asian Collection at the British Museum, offers a detailed description of a late 19th century cosmology manuscript from Burma. Sinéad Ward describes a *Kammavācā* manuscript from Burma which, contrary to the usual format, is illustrated with scenes from Jātaka tales and the life of the Buddha, beautifully done in red and gold. All three essays are lavishly illustrated, showcasing the highly developed art of illustration of the 18th and 19th centuries in Southeast Asia.

The second part of the book, entitled “Inscribing Religious Belief and Practice”, has three essays on the contribution of manuscripts to religious history. Angela S. Chiu discusses how legends of the Buddha’s visit to the northern Thai territories, along with relics, were techniques for fixing these places as part of the Buddhist world. The essays by Ori Tavor and Daniel Sou show how newly found caches of manuscripts from the Warring States Period (453–211 BCE) are changing the debate on the evolution of early Chinese religious beliefs and practices. Tavor examines manuscripts which debated the use of ritual while Sou examines texts on ghosts, suggesting that exorcism was taken up as a duty by local administrations.

The third section, entitled “Technologies of Writing”, reflects Schoenberg’s pioneering interest in the digitalization of manuscripts. Kim Plofker notes that the

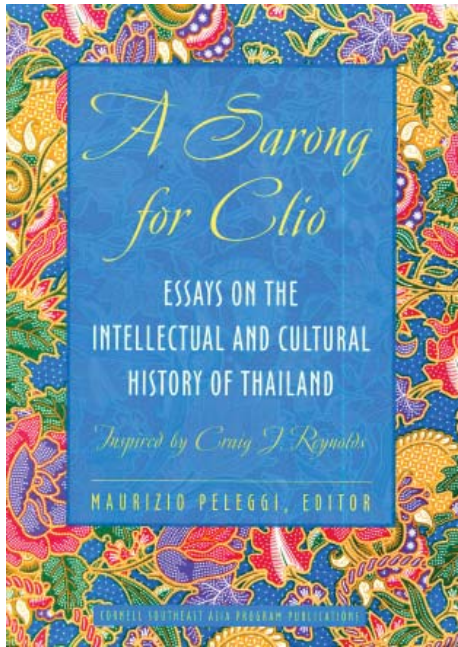
current transition from paper to digital recording is as momentous as the transition from oral memory to written media in the Vedic age. He shows how authors of early Sanskrit texts considered written recording to be inferior to memory because copyists introduced mistakes. He shows how scribes adapted techniques from oral recording to new written forms in Sanskrit manuscripts on scientific topics. Sergei Tourkin provides a guide to the intricate abbreviations used in astronomical and astrological manuscripts written in Arabic script from the 10th to 14th centuries CE.

Over 150,000 manuscripts were found along the Silk Road, especially in the Dunhuang Library Cave, but were scattered among several collections and libraries. Susan Whitfield describes how the International Dunhuang Project is bringing these manuscripts back together again in online form (<http://idp.bl.uk>). In addition, Whitfield provides a fascinating discussion of the evolution of the media or support for writing in Asia, beginning with wood, and then progressing to leaves, paper, strung books, and then concertinas. Peter M. Scharf describes the software developed for digital recording and cataloguing of Sanskrit manuscripts at the virtual Sanskrit Library ([www.sanskritlibrary.com](http://www.sanskritlibrary.com)).

Although each essay is focused in some way on manuscripts, the range of topics in this collection is very wide, beyond any individual scholar's core interest. The delight of such books is that they induce the reader to wander into unknown territory, often with surprising results. The essays are all of extremely high quality. The book is also beautifully designed by Judith Stagnitto Abbate, and superbly produced—a work of art in itself.

Chris Baker

*A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Thailand – Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds*, edited by Maurizio Peleggi (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Program Publications, 2015). ISBN: 0877277966 (hard) ISBN: 9780877277668 (soft) . Hardcover US\$69.95. Paperback 925 Baht/US\$23.95.



By all accounts and purposes, *A Sarong for Clio* is a deliciously seditious collection of essays on the intellectual and cultural history of Thailand. At first glance through the table of contents, one might seriously wonder if, without such a mighty muse as Craig Reynolds, such a collection of works by such prominent figures in the field of Thai history—the likes of Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, Thongchai Winichakul, Tamara Loos, etc.—could ever be brought together and published side by side in such a harmonious and awe-inspiring collection. The area, topic, and period of the articles in *A Sarong for Clio* are quite diverse, covering a rather expansive range, from the literary history of early modern Siam to contemporary political issues of “Governance in Thailand.” Yet, there is a general theme that runs through all the pieces, creating a sort of harmonious unity and

intellectual authority for the collection. That is what obviously appears to be inspired by Craig Reynold’s lifelong passion and enthusiasm for investigating history through the perspective and experience of those outside the comfortable and authoritative position of the ruling elite—be it the common people, the subaltern, or even the defeated oppositional elite. While history is often criticized as being written by the victors, and therefore, too frequently employed by the ruling powers to suppress voices of dissent and oppress the suffering masses, *A Sarong for Clio* suggests that Craig Reynolds’ kind of history strives to give voice to the voiceless and provide the subaltern with a fighting chance through alternative narratives that do not necessarily glorify the elite.

The collection is divided into two equally exciting parts: *Part I – Historiography, Knowledge, and Power* and *Part II – Political and Business Culture*. The first part consists of four essays investing four alternative narratives that either contest the mainstream or illuminate the not so widely explored subaltern alternative. It is always a pleasure to read the historical pieces by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit and this collection starts out with their essay on “The Revolt of Khun Phaen: Contesting Power in Early Modern Siam.” The article investigates how the folk epic *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* could have once—prior to being revised, reinterpreted, and coopted by the ruling elite—served as a sort of common man’s manual for navigating and negotiating power with the ruling class. The second article is Thongchai Winichakul’s “Fabrication, Stealth, and Copying of Historical Writings: The Historiographical Misconducts of Mr.

Kulap of Siam.” In this essay, Thongchai argues that scandal, discredit, and punishment of Kulap between the late 19th to the early 20th century had more to do with the crime of narrating history from the perspective of the commoner instead of following the safe and approved royalist tradition. While Chris and Pasuk focus on the narrative of village folk and Thongchai on the cultivated commoner, the third essay in the collection, “Renegade Royalist: Autobiography and Siam’s Disavowed Prince Prisdang” by Tamara Loos, explores the intriguing narrative of a banned and disgraced member of the royal family. The defeated and denounced elite could also be the source of a bitterly oppressed subaltern narrative. Part I concludes with the editor, Maurizio Peleggi’s own essay, “The Plot of Thai Art History: Buddhist Sculpture and the Myth of National Origins,” which questions the very core narrative of the mainstream nationalist narrative of the nation’s origins through the mainstream investigation in the field of art history and interpretations of ancient artifacts.

Part II explores how the alternative narrative of the subaltern and the marginalized are reflected in various aspects of Thailand’s political and business culture from the era of modernization in the mid to late 19th century all the way up to the complex political conflicts of the present day. The essays in this part are also quite diverse in area and scope—from grand themes of republicanism in Patrick Jory’s “Republicanism in Thai History” and Kasian Tejapira’s “Governance in Thailand” to the more specific cases of populism in local politics in Yoshinori Nishizaki’s “Big is Good: The Banharn-Jaemsai Observatory Tower in Suphanburi,” and James Ockey’s analytic study of madness in “Madness, Authoritarianism, and Political Participation: The Curious Case of Cham Jamratnet.” These four essays argue that there are valid and inspiring new ways of perceiving and understanding political culture in Thailand outside of the mainstream royalist nationalistic framework that appears to have dominated the field from Prince Damrong to Luang Wichit Watakarn, and even up to the present military government. A more creative and comprehensive view of Thai political culture needs to be discovered from the vantage point of local agents, lower ranking political players, and regional politics.

Villa Vilaithong’s “Marketing Business Knowledge and Consumer Culture before the Boom: The Case of *Khoo Khaeng* Magazine,” which is probably the most brilliant piece in this entire collection, also stands out among the work of other contributors in Part II in that she focuses on an alternative culture that is not necessarily marginalized nor subaltern, and yet might be the most potent antidote to the dominant royalist nationalist mainstream narrative. Villa’s investigation of the consumer culture through the fantastic success of *Khoo Khaeng* magazine provides a stunning description of the rise of a wider and more diverse business sector that was becoming a force to reckon with. Parliamentary democracy in Thailand might have been hampered by coup after coup throughout the Cold War era, but the rise of the business sector and the increasing influence of foreign investment and the global economy has made the monopoly of political power in Thailand’s domestic scene less viable.

In summary, *A Sarong for Clio* has brought about quite an impressive collection of essays on Thai intellectual and cultural history. It is definitely not to be missed by all who claim Thai studies—Thai history, in particular—as their field. There is, however,



one major irony that needs to be addressed concerning the form and presentation of this volume, if one is to truly honor the legacy of Craig Reynolds in this review. There is a problem with naming the collection *A Sarong for Clio* and then having a picture of a young Craig Reynolds (circa 1964) sitting topless in what looks very much like a sarong on the first page of the introduction. This leads one to conclude that Craig Reynolds is being elevated to the supernatural plain of existence of *Clio*, the muse of history. This is not a framework that encourages any sort of critical discussion about anything involving Craig Reynolds' works and, as the editor, Maurizio Peleggi himself asserts, also in the first page of his introduction, such a framework is "not befitting academic writing."

It is ironic that Craig Reynolds spent much of his career studying and promoting alternative historical narratives of the subaltern and marginalized, and yet the volume that he supposedly inspired purports to deify him—make him into a muse that is not to be questioned or criticized. While many of the pieces featured in *A Sarong for Clio* mention the stifling socio-political and academic environment that has arisen in the context of the hegemonic dominance of "royalist nationalism" that operate through draconian *lèse majesté* laws, none of the pieces debate, criticize or even question Reynolds' legacy, ideas, research, methodology or political standpoint. From the perspective of this collection, Craig Reynolds is the mainstream, and so much so that, from a reviewer's perspective, it appears doubtful whether or not there really exists any room to review this collection in any way that is less than positive.

Another major drawback of this collection that needs to be addressed is that, not unlike the mainstream royalist nationalist history works of the conservative elite so criticized throughout this volume, many of the pieces that make up *A Sarong for Clio* appear to be very inward looking. Debates and discussions in the more current pieces, such as Jory's "Republicanism in Thai History," and Kasian's "Governance in Thailand," appear to be limited to the author and the Thai right wing conservatives. The collection as a whole appears to have failed to connect and relate to the broader context of the postcolonial/post-Cold War globalized world. Historians who work on any other area outside of Thailand, even fellow Orientals, would have to struggle pretty hard to discover the relevance of all these very unique cases of very unique Thailand to their respective fields of studies. This, plus the hyper-exoticized title and cover of the book could result in the grave danger of misunderstanding the purpose of the project and altogether misunderstanding Craig Reynolds' legacy.

At this point I would beg readers, most of whom are probably very familiar with Craig Reynolds' works and have enormous respect for him as an academic and historian, to please take a step back and pretend to be an outsider to the field of Thai Studies—especially Thai history—and look again at the title and the cover of this book currently under discussion. Which part of *A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Thailand – Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds*, with the Southeast Asian floral sarong pattern in the background, does not suggest that this is yet another institutional publication mythologizing a great white male historian of an exotic Oriental land?

I personally have the utmost respect for Craig Reynolds as an academic, a teacher, an intellectual and definitely one of the most brilliant historians of our time and I write

this review with the most profound regards to what is about to become his legacy. The work of the great historian should not only provide inspiration, it should be discussed, debated, criticized, challenged and pushed to the limit so as to continue to be relevant and meaningful through the unforgiving test of time. Craig Reynolds deserves better than to be made into a muse. We all need to honor him by engaging his work more rigorously.

Wasana Wongsurawat

## Contributors

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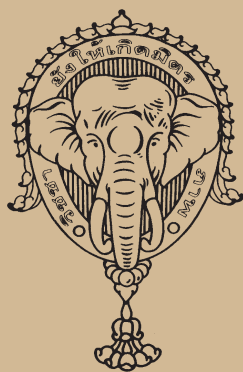
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