The Translation Program

The translation program of the Thai-Yunnan Project begins its full operation with this issue of the newsletter. On other pages are translations of a number of selections from Daizu Shehui Lishi Diaocha: Xishuang Banna translated by Irene Bain and Terry Narramore. It is our hope that these and future translations will be of value not only to members of the Project at The Australian National University, but to scholars internationally. In the development of this program over the next half year or so the editor and the translators will appreciate comments and suggestions from readers. It is the view of the translators that the marginal utility of continuing translations from this particular series may rapidly diminish. The editors and compilers of the (Chinese) series set up a standard pattern of description which is repeated from one local area to another. Our feeling is that the scholar who is likely to need that kind of comparative detail will have direct access to the Chinese original. What is of interest to most of the rest of us are broader social, economic, political and general ethnographic descriptions. Readers' reactions and requests will be much appreciated. Douglas Miles, who is currently in Southeast Asia, has suggested we include some Chinese sources on the Yao. We will discuss this with him in more detail on his return. There are three aspects of the translations published in this issue to which the editor would like to draw attention.

First, we have here some of the source material used by Lemoine for his paper presented to the International Conference on Thai Studies in July 1987. This paper and the earlier pioneering paper
by Condominas on the evolution of Thai political systems have opened up a field of major interest in comparative Tai ethnography and the availability of at least some of the Chinese sources should foster critical and innovative comment.

contents

The Translation Program 1
On Northern Thai Scripts
   (trans. from CÎds) 2
A note on CÎds' 'archaic Tai' script and its relation to LŶ 3
Ahom Studies 4

Translations
   Preface 5
   The Situation in Cheli County 6
   Village Chief Admin in Jinghong Banna 9
   Autobiography of Kang Langzhuang 14
   Religion & Feudal Leadership 16
   Econ. conditions of Mengjinghong Dai 22
   Characteristics of village class structure 24

News from other universities 26
Mapping in Yunnan 27

The second point of interest is reference to the Tai LŶ origin myth of the Golden Deer. We have not yet been able to locate an extended version of this myth, but there is at least one other recent reference in English to it (Zheng Lan Travels through Xishuangbanna China's Subtropical Home of Many Nationalities Beijing Foreign Languages Press 1981 55 pages). This author refers to the story of 'Bayalawu' a legend of the founding of the kingdom, which '... with its many variations is a popular one in the prefecture' (2-3). We have, so far, the flimsiest of outlines, but the cognate stories for north Thailand are immediately recognizable. It is the tale of Suwan (or Luang) Kham Daeng. This may be found in French in Notton Annales du Siam 1e partie 1926: 1-6, in Thai in Sanguan Chotisukharat Tamnan Lanna v.1 1971: 117-28, and in English in Wijeyewardene Place and Emotion in Northern Thai Ritual Behaviour 1986: 228-36). The implications of this section of the chronicle are still somewhat obscure (it seems, among other things, to confront the question: 'How could there be Law in human society before the Buddha?') and it would be of great interest to have LŶ versions. The rarity of Northern Thai texts of the story is indicated by the fact that it does not appear to be mentioned in the Chiang Mai University catalogue of palm-leaf texts (Lan Na Literature 1986).
The final point we raise may be introduced by asking 'What connection is there between "Bayalawu" and "Suwan Kham Daeng"? Bain and Narramore are collecting items of Tai/Sino-Tai vocabulary which may hopefully become a useful resource. Looking at the sinicization it is often, but not always possible to identify the Tai word behind it - the translators, who are sinologists rather than Tai specialists, occasionally have difficulty identifying the Tai meaning behind Chinese transliterations of Tai sounds. Is there any connection between 'Bayalawu' and 'Suwan Kham Daeng'? We will be happy to receive any comments at all on words, etymology and meaning.

This newsletter is clearly not a medium for full-length scholarly papers, but we will appreciate short contributions, ideas and comments on these and other topics. (Many anthropologists have long regretted the end of the old MAN.)

* * *

On Northern Tai Scripts
by

George Číds

[i] ...I would hypothesize that soon after the Tai migrations, the Tais took up the writing system of the Mons. I reach this conclusion even in the absence of samples of this early writing, since the script of the Ahoms and that presently used by the Tais of Sipsongpanna (the LŶ) have characteristics decidedly like Old Mon ...

[ii] Since the vowel and consonant [values] of the letters that the Tais appropriated from the Mons differed from the Mon source and since the Tais at that time were not yet skilled in matters of orthography, this adaptation of Mon script to write in the Tai language was bound to have deficiencies. Even today among the Northern Tais, whose script is derived from the ancient Tai one, it is still inconvenient to read and write. Certain vowels and consonants are lacking. There is no tonal marking and there is irregular arrangement of vowels and consonants...

[iii] In the Lan Na Tai area, the oldest known inscription is written in Sukhothai script - that of...Wat Pha YŶn, Lamphun [dated 1371 A.D.]... Sukhothai script was subsequently used in the Lan Na area, but after about 1500 the Lan Na Tais stopped using Sukhothai script and used instead the LŶ script - i.e. that of the Tais of Sipsongpanna - the exact reason for this being unclear. Possibly it was because the LŶ script had rounded letters, similar to that of the Burmese, whose power was on the increase in the Lan Na region...

[iv] The Northern Tai scripts have rounded letters which superficially might lead one to conclude that they were derived directly from Burmese. However this is not the case. While admittedly the Shan alphabet has incorporated a good number of Burmese letters, other Northern Tai scripts such as LŶ and Lan Na (Lao Yuan) do not really match Burmese apart from general roundness of character.
Tai people living north of Siam are referred to as the Northern Tai. They are in two groups: the Tai Yai ['Greater Tai'], living along the Salween River in Burma, and the Tai Noi ['Lesser Tai'] living in the mu'ang [town/principality] of Sipsongpanna and in the mu'ang of Lan Na Tai.

In respect to spoken and written language, these Tai Noi differ from the Siamese and from people living in the mu'ang of Lan Chang - who are also Tai Noi. The main reason for this is that the Siamese and Lao of Lan Chang were once under Khmer domination, at which time written and spoken Khmer were used for administration; hence there is much Khmer vocabulary in the languages of the Siamese and Lao of Lan Chang. Also Sukhothai script, the precursor of Siamese and Lao of Lan Chang, originated from cursive Khmer...

The Tai Noi living far to the north of the Khmer heartland did not fall under Khmer influences. There is not a single Khmer word in their languages. Their script comes from the ancient Tai writing which I have hypothesized derives from Old Mon - the precursor of Modern Mon and Burmese...

[v] The writing system of the Tai Noi of Sipsongpanna (the LŸ) and of Lan Na (the Yuan) differ in important respects from that of the Thai Yai (the Ngiw) [i.e. Shan] of Burma. Although the letters in each system are rounded, they differ in detail of shape. Certain [Tai Noi] letters, such as G, c, j, n, P, y are shaped like inscriptional Old Mon ones. In some cases, shapes are similar to Ahom. Those interested in tracing what archaic Tai letters looked like should take as a basis the Ahom and Tai Noi scripts.


A note on CÏds' 'archaic Tai' script and its relation to LŸ

Anthony Diller

In the passage above, CÏds raises important questions, some with direct bearing on LŸ history. Did the ancestors of the present LŸ directly inherit an 'archaic Tai script', based on Old Mon of nearly a thousand years ago, as seems to be claimed in [i] and [v]? Did this script then spread south to the Chiang Mai area in about the sixteenth century, as in [iii], accounting for the local Lan Na script known as akso'n tham lan na, or tua mu'ang?

Since 1925 when CÏds wrote the opinions above additional sources have come to light which make for some complications. An interesting puzzle concerns "Y" symbols in the LŸ and Lan Na writing systems, shown in the table along with other related letters in several Tai
varieties.
The four initials represented as 'Y, Y, ,, and H., generally match sound
counters that have been established for Proto-Tai on the basis of
comparative evidence. All Tai dialects have undergone sound mergers
involving these initials, and for those with writing systems, this is
often accompanied by some respelling. (Central Thai is notorious in
this regard.)

According to CÍds' hypothesis, the LỸ letters are in some sense the
direct descendents of his putative archaic Tai writing. Thus the
upper-left-hand item ['Y] (used for cognates of items in a Proto-Tai
preglottalized semivowel) would, in this view, have arrived in the
Lan Na (Chiang Mai) area from the north by about 1500.

"Fak Kham" refers to a style of Sukhothai-like writing in the Lan Na
or Chiang Mai area. It is attested from about 1410. As the table
shows, this script also used a ['Y] symbol quite similar to that in
the (LỸ-derived?) Lan Na script. Note however that the Sukhothai
script (attested from about 1300) did not use this letter. Cognate
vocabulary items in Sukhothai sources are spelled with a digraph
composed of a glottal stop sign plus a Sukhothai "plain Y", as shown
in the table. The "plain Y" would seem to be a simplification (one of
many) of late Khmer-Pallava writing that CÍds and most others have
considered the main prototype for Sukhothai letters. The digraph with
glottal stop probably directly represented the phonetic state of
affairs in 14th-century Sukhothai. Note that the counterpart of
"plain Y" in LỸ and Lan Na scripts has a different shape. (It
represents an unsimplified appropriation of Old Mon.)

The problem is: how to account for the 'tail' of this letter in LỸ?
Also - most significantly - in Fak Kham?

A strict application of CÍds' theory would appear to require that the
'full-tailed' ['Y] of LỸ preceded the 'tailless' plain [Y] of Fak
Kham and Sukhothai. I.e. the progression would have been: LỸ ['Y] to
Lan Na ['Y] to Fak Kham ['Y]. Then in Fak Kham a 'tailless' plain [Y]
would have been innovated by removing the 'tail' of the Fak Kham ['Y].
This latter symbol then, but not its original 'tailed' progenitor,
found its way into the Sukhothai system.

Three objections to this proposal can be raised. (1) The presently
known material evidence suggests the opposite sequence: Sukhothai, Fak
Kham, Lan Na and then LỸ (along with 16-century Lao script samples as
well as White Tai.). (2) The adding of 'tails' to preexisting letters
is a well-documented and systematic principle used to expand Tai
consonant inventories. Thus adding a 'tail' to Fak Kham plain [Y] to
derive a distinctive variant ['Y] is in line with a wider practice.
But the structural removal of preexisting 'tails' to form extra
letters is not attested. (3) More technically, in terms of
reconstructed phonological history, the Sukhothai digraph given a
preglottalized semivowel interpretation can be taken as conservative.
The fact that dialects to the north chose to represent cognate
vocabulary items with a single ['Y] graph would seem to mark an
innovating simplification (loss of contrastive preglottalization,
probably accompanied by tonal distinction). Loss of preglottalization with consonantal merger is almost certainly an irreversible sound change, pointing to the Sukhothai phonological system as a prior one.

On the other hand, these objections might be overcome. New Tai LÝ orthographic evidence may become available. Çl ds may be pointing to a set of possibilities that would require reassessment of existing ideas about Tai linguistic and cultural history.

Far more extensive study of Tai LÝ oral and written linguistic sources in Yunnan will be needed before the questions Çl ds' work raises can be answered definitively.

* * *

AHOM STUDIES

Baas Terwiel

The Ahom language is one of the lesser-known forms of human speech, but it is nevertheless of considerable scholarly interest. Ahom used to be spoken in Assam, in Northeastern India, and it represents the westernmost of the Tai language family. It has long been extinct, the descendants of the Ahom-speakers having adopted the Assamese language and script. While the spoken language died out at least some two centuries ago and there are therefore no speakers of a living Ahom language, a representation of this language did survive in the form of a large number of documents written in the unique Ahom script and language. Of all these documents only a few have been studied in some detail, leaving unstudied any texts, dealing with topics such as divination, astrology, housebuilding and soul-summoning rituals.

Since Ahom forms part of the wide family of Tai languages, it is of great interest from a comparative point of view. If, as most scholars believe, Ahom was in effective isolation from other Tai languages since the early thirteenth century, then much information from their documents can be assumed to have been carried from Southeast Asia almost eight centuries ago. Or, if in the Ahom vocabulary there are words that are similar to other Tai languages, these words may be assumed to have been part of the shared Tai tradition for at least some eight hundred years.

The study of Ahom from documents is very difficult. The standard reference works are inadequate and contain an extraordinary number of errors. The writing system, derived from old-Mon, is unsuited to convey many essential features of the language: there is no system to indicate with what tone a particular syllable ought to be pronounced; consonant clusters are often not given, distinctions between various consonents and vowels are blurred, and the spelling of many words is not consistent.

Written Ahom thus presents many problems. If, for example, in an Ahom manuscript we come across the syllable written as 'man', there
are several possible pronunciations: it could be "man", "maan", "ban", "baan", "wan", "waan", or even "mlan", or "mran". In addition, each of these possibilities may be regarded as a candidate for a range of different tonal distinctions. A translator may have to consider a dozen or more possible translations before attempting to assign a meaning to the syllable.

Members of the Asian Studies Faculty began taking an interest in Ahom in 1979, when B.J. Terwiel first visited Assam. A.V.N. Diller joined him and since then every year these two have either conducted research in India and Southeast Asia, or been able to attract Ahom specialists to visit the Faculty. In 1986 two Assamese worked for three months in Canberra at an Ahom translation project and a year after a leading Ahom scholar from Thailand worked a similar period at the ANU.

After almost nine years the project has already produced some promising results including two monographs and a dozen articles. Many microfilms and photocopies of Ahom documents have been collected, making Canberra a recognised centre for Ahom studies. A variety of hitherto inaccessible manuscript sources is being prepared for publication. In the Faculty's Computer Centre an Ahom laser font has been created - making it for the first time possible to type and reproduce Ahom texts. It is expected that these texts will form the basis for a reappraisal of traditional mainland Southeast Asian languages and literature.

* * *

Translations from Chinese

PREFACE

Yunnan is the home of many ethnic minorities; apart from the Han group there are 24 minority groups and a number which are yet to be classified. These minorities comprise one-third of the total population of the Province and are distributed over more than two-thirds of its area. Due to historical and particular geographic factors, the socio-economic development of each minority has been extremely unbalanced, resulting in various, diverse stages of historical development.

After Liberation, ethnic survey research developed rapidly with the general upsurge in minority studies. Between 1950 and 1955, the Commission for Border Work of the Yunnan Provincial Branch of the Communist Party and the Yunnan Provincial Commission for Ethnic Affairs undertook survey research on the socio-economic history of all minorities in the Province so that the Party could implement regional autonomy, bring democratic reform and socialist transformation to provide these minority areas with a scientific and systematic basis for policy implementation. Concurrent survey research into the marriage customs, religious beliefs, literature and art of the various ethnic groups progressed to varying degrees. In 1956, a unit for socio-historical investigation of Yunnan minorities was created under the direct leadership of the Minorities Commission within the Standing Committee of the National Peoples' Congress. It cooperated with the
relevant Provincial authorities in undertaking large-scale surveys of the minorities in the Yunnan border area. In 1958, further survey research was carried out in association with the compilation of brief Histories and Annals for each minority. During these periods of investigation, the researchers obtained the enthusiastic support of the cadres and masses in each ethnic group. A large body of material on ethnic minorities was amassed through these surveys which is valuable for scientific research and relates to both Marxist ethnography and ethnographic theory and many other important areas of social science.

Due to 'rightist' tendencies and to the damage done to socio-historical surveys of ethnic minorities by Lin Biao and the 'Gang of Four', it has been impossible to publicly publish socio-historical survey material concerning the Yunnan minorities for many years. Now, these post-revolutionary accounts of the socio-historical investigations of minorities in Yunnan prior to the democratic revolution will be edited and published under the direct leadership of the Editorial Committee for the five series concerning ethnic minority problems, a part of the National Minority Affairs Commission, in order to meet the needs of the minority areas in implementing the Four Modernisations and to foster and develop research on Marxist ethnography and ethnographic theory.

"Congkan" is a collection of comprehensive survey materials pertaining to Minority history, ethnography and other areas of study. In this instance, we have selected as our basis edited draft reports of old surveys, to ensure the objectivity of the survey materials. We adopted value for scientific research as the standard for inclusion in the publication and also gave preference to those pieces pertaining to the pre-revolutionary period. The decision to reproduce the text in full or in excerpts was based on the quality of the survey material.

As survey materials on the social history of Yunnan minorities were collected and edited at different times, many materials are affected by the limitations of those historical conditions. Moreover, many of the original researchers are now scattered through different organisations within and outside Yunnan Province. They bear heavy work responsibilities and are unable to participate directly in the task of editing. As the present editorial staff of "Congkan" is small and limited in ability, failings and mistakes are unavoidable, so we hope that readers will offer criticism and comment.

"Five Series on Minority Problems" Yunnan Provincial Editorial Committee.
Translated by Irene Bain

THE SITUATION IN CHELI COUNTY

Edited by Liu Jie

The Political Situation
The positions of Cheli Pacification Commissioner (xuan wei shi) and the various lords [tu si in Chinese] of the meng [mueng in Lue] have been passed on, in hereditary tradition, from generation to generation since the Yuan and Ming dynasties. The political authority of the lords constituted a particularly tight, integrated system of feudal rule. The Office of the Pacification Commissioner was just like a small court: its office structures were located at the capital of the Prefecture; the relatives of the Pacification Commissioner were like Princes and Ministers to the court; the various meng lords (meng tu si) were like Marquises; the ministers given responsibility for each meng and each village were very like senior Local Agents (da li), and; the chieftains were like local Officials. If one was not a member of the ruling family one could not become an official, and commoners could at most rise to the level of lesser chieftain.

There was very strict demarcation between the ranks and grades of the lords, officials and chieftains.

A feature of the rulership of the lords was the hereditary system operating among the descendents of the two classes, the rulers and the ruled. The lords and the royal kin were the ruling class from generation to generation, while the descendents of the commoners were ruled from generation to generation. The ruling Lord of the Land [Pacification Commissioner to the Chinese] and royal kin held supreme authority over the life and death, give and take of the commoners. The commoners merely had "duties" such as corvŽe and the payment of various taxes. They had to bow on seeing the lords or royal kin, and were not permitted to marry into the families of the rulers. The lords and the royal kin referred to commoners as "ka pai" [kha: phai in Lue], meaning that they were base "slaves," and could not only wantonly beat, curse and order them, but even regarded the violation of common women as "legal." The Sipsong Panna of the past was completely under the autocratic control of the feudal lords.

(1) The Organisation of the Cheli Pacification Commission

The Cheli Pacification Commission was an integrated system of control; a huge structure, well-organised and made up of various sorts of officials. It can briefly be described as follows:

i) The Pacification Commissioner, or "zhao pian ling" [tsao phae:n din in Lue],...was the highest administrative leader among the various lords who exercised hereditary control over Sipsong Panna. Apart from areas where the Pacification Commission had direct control, such as the territory around its Office, Meng Jing Hong [Mueng Chieng Hung in Lue, where the Court was located] and a few special mountain areas, the greater part of Sipsong Panna was governed by the lords of each meng (meng tu si); however, these lords were obliged to pay tribute to the Pacification Commission, to seek its instructions and to report to it on important matters. The Pacification Commission also had authority to intervene in administrative affairs of the lords, to appoint or dismiss lords and to sanction the appointment or dismissal of officials.
ii) Royal Kin: According to the tradition associated with the Pacification Commissioner (and also the lords of the meng), one's position and its function would be transmitted hereditarily to the eldest son. The younger brothers of the Pacification Commissioner would be ranked in descending order according to age, Second Commissioner, Third Commissioner, and so on. In general, they were not permitted to intervene in administrative matters of the Pacification Commission, but could be appointed by the Pacification Commissioner as important officials, or be enfeoffed as lords of certain meng, or appointed to represent the Pacification Commissioner. For example, the present [1951] Fifth Commissioner, Dao Dongcai, has acted as Prime Minister--Du Long Gao; the Sixth Commissioner, Dao Dongting, has acted as Lord (tu si) of Meng Han; the Seventh Commissioner, Dao Dongyu, has acted as Lord of Meng Hun.

iii) There were three principal Ministers of the Pacification Commission: The Minister with the highest rank and greatest authority was the Huai Lang Man Wa [Hau:j-da:ng Ba:n Au:t in Lue], also known as Du Long Gao. "Du" means "the highest," "Long" means "minister," and "Gao" means "first." Thus the title meant the Highest First Minister, and ranked only below that of Pacification Commissioner himself,...just like the prime minister of the [Chinese] Imperial Court. He wielded power over the administration, finances and revenue of Sipsong Panna. Of the two remaining Ministers, the Huai Lang Man Hong [Hau:j-da:ng Ba:n Khum in Lue] controlled the administration of justice and household registration, while the Huai Lang Zhuang Wang [Hau:j-da:ng Tsau:m Wang in Lue] controlled the administration of food supplies. In addition, there was the Zhao Long Pa Sa, resembling the Inspector General of the [Chinese] Imperial Court, who controlled the finances and internal affairs of the Pacification Commission, and the Zhao Long Na Hua, the Zhao Long Na Jiu, the Zhao Long Zhen Han, etc., who were differentiated by categories of the Left and Right [Senior and Junior in Chinese Imperial rankings], Principal and Deputy, Marshal and General-in-Chief, etc. Other officials were each given a specific title according to their tasks. There was even a special minister who managed the Pacification Commissioner's elephant and assigned the people of a certain village to raise it.

iv) The Royal Council: This was the administrative organisation within the Pacification Commission. It was composed of the important ministers, the Huai Lang Man Wa, Huai Lang Man Hong and Huai Lang Zhuang Wang, and the various representatives of the lords of the meng, delegated to stay at the capital, known as "Bo Lang" [Pau: Lam in Lue]. They "elected" a Zhao Jing Ha [Tsao Tseng Ha in Lue] as President of the Council. In general, the important ministers and officials would concurrently act as Bo Lang for each meng. For example, the Du Long Gao at times concurrently acted as Bo Lang for the Lord of Meng Hun, and the Huai Lang Zhuang Wang at times concurrently served as Bo Lang for the Lords of Meng Hai and Meng Hun. The Royal Council did not have fixed times for meeting; most of the time it did not have business to attend to and would meet as matters arose. For the most part the jurisdiction of the Royal Council included: (1) Important matters concerning Sipsong Panna; (2) Disputed
incidents which the lords of each meng had not been able to resolve
themselves; (3) Modifications to the established system of Sipsong
Panna and formulation of a new system; (4) The hereditary
transmission, or abrogation, of the duties of the Pacification
Commissioner or lords of each meng; (5) Important matters concerning
the Office and Government of the Pacification Commission; (6) Requests
made by the lords of various meng or by the common people to resolve
certain matters; (7) Matters which the Pacification Commissioner
wished to discuss. All the Council's resolutions were submitted to
the Pacification Commissioner for implementation. If the Pacification
Commissioner did not approve [of a resolution], he could return it to
the Council for reconsideration or exercise direct veto. Alternatively,
if the Council disagreed with a resolution submitted
by the Pacification Commissioner, they could also oppose it, although
disputes and dissension were actually very rare.

[A chart on the overall structure of the Sipsong Panna political
system is then presented. This has been reproduced in Lemoine, "Tai
Lue Historical Relation with China and the Shaping of the Sipsong
Panna Political System," Proceedings of the International Conference
on Thai Studies 1987 vol.3 pt.1 p. 125. Liu Jie also presents a
detailed breakdown of official titles and rankings with descriptions
of their duties.]

(2) The Rulership System of the Meng Lords

The Cheli Pacification Commissioner held jurisdiction over all
of Sipsong Panna which was divided into twelve large meng and a
certain number of smaller meng. Altogether there were over twenty
lords, each with an integrated system and structure of rule. Apart
from the obligation of each meng in reporting matters to the
Pacification Commissioner, there was no intervention [by the
Commission] in the local political and financial authority of the
various meng; it was the lords of the meng and their rulership
organisation which managed these affairs. Since the establishment of
the county system of government [in 1927] some of the meng have tended
to decline and the organisational structure of their rule has tended
to decay; however, the majority of the meng have preserved their
inherent system of rule and their organisational structures are still
intact.

Below is a brief description of the system of rulership of the
meng lords:

i) Lords (tu si): These were known as "zhao meng" [tsao mueng in Lue],
which meant "lord of the locality." There was a lord in every meng
except for Meng Jing Hong which was under the direct jurisdiction of
the Pacification Commissioner. Among the lords of the various meng
there were grades, rankings and distinctions made between those of
high and low authority. According to ancient custom, twice every
year, at the "opening of the gate" and "closing of the gate"
festivals, the lords of each meng had to pay tribute and present
themselves to the Court [Pacification Commission in Chinese terms].
During the period of Nationalist (Guomindang) rule, contact between
the lords and the Court was restricted and, in general, the royal kin were entrusted to represent the lords. The lords were the hereditary rulers of all the meng. If upon the death of a lord there were no sons to inherit the mantle, or if a young lord was too immature to direct affairs, the royal kin could propose a representative to take charge of the powers of the lord's position. This position was known as the "dai ban" [a regent, but literally, chargé d'affaires] and was of equivalent status to a lord endorsed by the Imperial seal. However, those assigned to be "dai ban" had to be approved by the Royal Council and the Pacification Commissioner, so that, though there were some "dai ban" who were not of the same clan of a particular meng lord, they were certainly drawn from the royal kin and were most frequently the paternal or maternal uncles of the lord. If the "dai ban" did not commit any grave errors, he could hold the position for life but could not hereditarily pass on the position to the next generation.

ii) Ministers: The court of each lord, on average, contained three or four Da Ba [Great Phya:]. The prime minister was known as the "Ba Gao" [Phya: Kao in Lue], meaning the first great chieftain or, in Chinese, Zhong Ba. His position was analogous to that of the Du Long Gao of the Pacification Commission, and he was responsible for the overall management of the affairs of the entire meng. Next came the Great Ba, the Second Ba and the Third Ba (the names varied in each meng), who controlled administration, finance general affairs, official documents, etc. Within the court there were also junior officials responsible for the transmission of orders, liaison, general affairs, and receptions respectively.

iii) The Council: In each meng there was an organisation similar to that of the Royal Council of Cheli. The president was known as the Zhao Guan [Tsao Kwa:n]. The meng councils were composed of the Zhao Guan and the Four Great Ba, as well as the representatives to the council from the village "huo xi" [ho sip], "ha ma" [kha: ma:] and other grass-roots organisations. Where some meng did not have a Zhao Guan the Ba Gao would fill the post of president.

(3) Village Organisation under the Rule of the Lords

The most basic unit of organisation under the rulership of the lords was the village and its various levels of chieftains such as Ba [Phya:], Zha [Tsas:], Xian [Sae:n], etc. The Ba was regarded as the Head, somewhat like a village elder, while the Lao Zha and Lao Xian formed a descending line of command. Many of the chieftains at this level were selected from among the common people. It could be said that they were "officials without the remuneration of officials," however, they did not bear the usual burdens [of the common people].

In relatively large villages there was a "Zhao Man" [Tsao Ba:n] who was responsible for ceremonies and rites; a "Ban Men" responsible for irrigation; a "Bo Ban" responsible for the registration and reception of guests, and; a "Bu Lang" who managed lost and found property and livestock. There was also a "Nai Mao" who was responsible for organising singing and dancing gatherings for the single males, while a "Nai Shao" [did the same] for for single
females. All of these positions were what could be called "non-official chieftains."

(4) Changes in the Rulership of the Lords Before and After Liberation

The Pacification Commissioner's power was gradually weakened when, after the coming of the Nationalists, county government was established, the lords were forbidden to liaise with each other and the extent of the Pacification Commissioner's rule was curtailed. He could only control areas such as Meng Jing Hong, Meng Han, Meng Long and Meng Yang. The main focus of his exploits was the people of Meng Jing Hong. After the death of the Pacification Commissioner, Dao Dongliang, the authority of the Commission passed into the hands of Dao Dongting (the Deputy Commissioner) and the Du Long Gao (Prime Minister). The ruling authority of each meng lord also gradually declined. A few meng, such as those in the Wu Ben region, had been without a lord for quite some time. When there were no descendents of the Lord of Meng Han, the Commissioner appointed his sixth brother, Dao Dongting, to be lord. In Meng Hun of Fo Hai County the people had killed five lords. Subsequently, the Commissioner appointed his fifth, and then seventh, brother to be lord, and both were driven away by the people. The power of the lords in most other regions had already declined, and most of the lords were weak and incompetent. The real power was in the hands of the chieftains and the Ba Gao [Phya: Kao].

During the war of liberation, the Nationalist Army stationed in the region of Sipsong Panna repeatedly harassed and exploited the local people. Many among the upper levels of these people also suffered. The swift development of a revolutionary situation brought with it landlord militia which openly profiteered on the revolution, and this brought rapid change to the rulership system of the lords in the region. In 1949 Communist guerrillas entered the region and began carrying out their work.

After liberation, the people close to the hinterland expressed deep dissatisfaction with the rule of the lords and they developed a political awareness. For example, after liberation in the Meng Yang region the Pacification Commission and its various lords of the meng returned to collect taxes. But the people staunchly resisted payment, saying they "would pay only on receipt of government notification," primarily because they detested the Pacification Commissioner's dependence on remnants of the Guomindang. They said that "not only have the chieftains failed to protect us, but they have collaborated with the Guomindang to harm us, so we will not hand over taxes." At the time for collection of the state grain tax in 1949, the people [believed they were being asked to pay taxes for the lord]. After [Communist Party] cadres explained the meaning of the state grain tax, the people happily said: "Apart from the state grain tax, we will also give the official [lord's] tax to the government." After liberation, the Pacification Commissioner secretly sent someone to collect taxes, but people in the Jia Dong region of Meng Jing Hong said: "If the Pacification Commissioner and the Royal Council want to collect taxes, we will pay only to those people who still exist." They also made it clear that "it would be better if, out of the county government and
the Royal Council, only one was kept and the other was rejected."
There had been 18 people above the rank of Zhao Huo Xi [Tsao Ho Sip] in Meng Long, and the people demanded that this number be reduced to below 8. There is still a section of the people, however, who hold deeply orthodox ideas about the rulership system of the lords.


A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF THE VILLAGE CHIEFTAIN ADMINISTRATION IN JIADONG, JINGHONG PANNA

Edited by Liu Rui

The System of the Lords in Jinghong.

(1) Organisation

The Pacification Commission of Sipsong Panna was located in the Jinghong plain. There were hereditarily enfeoffed lords in all the meng of Sipsong Panna, with the exception of the Jinghong plain which was controlled by the Pacification Commissioner himself. Below him, there were the Ba Long [Phya: Long] appointed to manage all the meng [in the Jinghong region]. There were four Ba Long who held jurisdiction over the four "long" [districts], that is, "Long Jiu," "Long Dong," "Long Kuang" and "Long Hui." Below this level were the "huo xi" (several villages grouped together) and, at the grass-roots level, the simple village.

In order to reduce the direct contact between the Ba Long and the masses, the Pacification Commissioner made it so that the areas under the jurisdiction of the Ba Long were in fact not linked with the area in which they resided. Nor were the huo xi divided according to the area encompassed by the long, but according to [a system whereby the land farmed by one group could be enclosed in the land of another group]. The present day "huo xi" of the Long Dong region, for example, used to be divided between the Ba Long of Long Kuang Si and the Ba Long Jing Feng, while the Ba Long Nuan Dian of Long Dong held jurisdiction over some villages in Long Jiu and Long Hui.

Apart from the "long" and "huo xi," there was also the "Bo Lang" system. All the villages of each meng were divided up among the Pacification Commissioner's chieftains (Bo Lang). There was a relatively close connection between the villages and the Bo Lang; he was the directly appointed chieftain who collected taxes and solved important disputes, and the masses had to perform corvŽe for him. A village would cultivate several of fields which were entrusted to the Bo Lang's management. The villages under the jurisdiction of the Bo
Lang were also separated. This kind of system weakened the effect of the Bo Lang's first rank chieftains, making it even easier for the lords to directly rule and exploit the masses.

In addition, there were forms of feudal militia, the zhen han. Each Long had a "ba han," and each village a "zha han" or "xian han," all of which were led directly by the lord. The "zha han" and "xian han" were responsible for preserving order.

(2) The Division of Labour Among the Village Chieftains

The village chieftains did not necessarily have the same titles [as those described above] in all the villages. Their authority [can be described in the following way]. The "ba," who managed overall village affairs and all important duties, was the highest chieftain in the entire village. Below him were the "zha," and among all the "zha" there was one "zha long" who was, in a similar fashion to the president in the Royal Council, the second highest chieftain in the entire village; in villages without a ba the zha long was the highest chieftain in the village. The "xian" was the next rank. The average "zha" and "xian" were assistants to the "ba" and "zha long," and were responsible for specific tasks, for example, the "zha han" or "xian han" was responsible for military matters. The "tao ge" were like gentry elders. Before Liberation the "bo ban" were responsible for collecting taxes, imposing levies and notifications of meetings. The "ban men" was responsible for irrigation and was appointed directly by the Royal Council.

(3) The Making of a Chieftain

If a chieftain was to be changed, it was decided each year at the "closing of the gate festival," close to the time of planting crops so that the handing over of the chieftain's fields was also convenient. The way in which a chieftain was made was as follows: if a "lao ba" was to be relieved of his position, then, nominally, a new "lao ba" would be elected from the masses, his name submitted for the approval of the "bo lang" and, finally, he would be appointed by the Royal Council. In fact, however, the "bo lang" would manipulate [this process]. The names of candidates for chieftains below the rank of "ba" were put forward by the [outgoing] lao ba. The promotion of chieftains to higher ranks was a step by step ascendency; those who were "lao ba" were in general "zha long" who had been promoted. If there were those who had been chieftains in the past and they became chieftains again, then they would take a higher ranking than their previous position.

(4) Privileges of the Chieftains

The privileges enjoyed by chieftains were basically the same in all villages, discrepancies only being a matter of degree.

1. They possessed fields of the chieftain. The average "ba" had more "salary fields" than the masses. The area of their fields was approximately 70 na (each na about equal to 0.25 mou, 70 na being 17.5
mou). Each "zha" and "xian" had fields which could yield about 70 loads of rice. Fields of each "bo ban" were a little larger than those of the "zha" and "xian." The size of the chieftains' fields was not, however, the same in each village; this was determined according to the amount of cultivated land in each village. At most, a chieftain's fields exceeded those of the masses by around 100 na. In addition, all the long possessed a 500 na piece of chieftains' land which was rented to the masses for cultivation while the "ba long" and other chieftains shared the income from the rent.

2. When the masses slaughtered pigs or oxen, they had to send [some of the meat] as gifts [to the chieftains], or if they captured wild animals they had to present the front legs as offerings. The "lao ba" received the most, from 0.5 to 1 jin [0.5 kg], while "zha" and "xian" would each receive 3 to 4 liang [1 liang=50g].

3. When the masses married or divorced they had to send wine and food, and pay 4 or 5 yuan.

4. The lao ba and zha long were exempted from all obligatory burdens. The "zha" and "xian" had very few burdens, generally speaking, about one third of those of the masses.

5. In dividing up the produce, the chieftains would take about one third of the total for themselves.

6. The ba and zha long were able to use free labour (the masses would work for them for nothing).

The Village Chieftains of Jiadong

(1) An Overview

The 14 villages of Jiadong contained 684 households, with a total of 93 chieftains (taken as households), or 13.6% of the total number of households. If a village is taken as a unit of measure, then the greatest percentage of chieftains in any village was 20% in Man Dong Lao. The lowest percentage was 10.8% in Man Huo Meng. There were 134 people who had [at some time] been chieftains, or 19.6% of the total households. Taking a village as the unit, Man Dong Lao was the village with the highest percentage of people who had been chieftains at 50%. The village with the lowest figure was Man Jing Tai with 4.4%.

Altogether the total number of past and present chieftains came to 227 (or 227 households), 33% of the total number of households, and 6.73% of the total population. If the tao ge and bo ban are excluded, these figures would be 29.8% and 5.84% respectively. Taking the village as a unit, Man Dong Lao was the village with the highest percentage of past and present chieftains at 70%, while the village with the lowest percentage was Man Dong at 25%. If the tao ge and bo ban are excluded from these figures, the village with the highest percentage was Man Dong Lao with 70%, and the lowest was Man Jing Tai with 13.3%.
(2) Changes Among the Chieftains

The total number of chieftains declined after Liberation. In 1947 there were 107, and in 1953 there were 93, a reduction of 10.5%. If the tao ge and bo ban are excluded, in 1947 there were 91 chieftains, and 78 in 1953, a reduction of 14.2%. The most dramatic decline occurred in Man Sha where 13 chieftains were reduced to 7, a reduction of 46%. No village increased the number of chieftains. The decline in numbers is continuing at present; for example, in Man Nuan Dian the masses do not want Zha Kang Lang Yin [one of the chieftains] and are already preparing to stop replenishing the number of chieftains. Some villages have proposed having a maximum of three chieftains.

The greatest reduction in the number of chieftains occurred in the period 1944-1950. In 1944 the numbers of chieftains shrank due to death and aging. In the initial stage of Liberation, chieftains were suspicious and apprehensive about Party policy so that after they retired they were seldom replaced. In 1952 some villages proposed supplementing the number of chieftains, but the masses were unwilling to do so because: 1) Now there were fewer matters to attend to there was no need for more chieftains; 2) With fewer chieftains the land of the chieftains could be divided up between the masses; 3) With fewer chieftains the public duties of the masses could be handled by more of the people.

At present, of those acting as chieftains 53 were appointed after Liberation, or 57% of the total, and most are junior chieftains. Because these chieftains are relatively inexperienced and have been directly influenced by the Party, they are receptive to new ideas and new routines.

Every year there have been changes among the chieftains, with the most changes taking place in 4 villages: Man Dong Lao, Man Mai Long, Man Huo Long and Man Lie. The most senior chieftains in these villages are changed almost every year, with 5 changes being made since 1948 to the present. The causes of these frequent changes are: 1) Each time a senior chieftain is changed, 12.5 yuan must be paid to the "bo lang" and he will then agree to a change; 2) Contradictions among the chieftains; 3) The increasing dissatisfaction of the masses with the chieftains.

The Village Chieftains Holding Power

Among 14 villages there are a total of 20 people holding power as lao ba or, in the majority of cases, zha long, the grass-roots leaders of feudal rule. Among these 20 there are 8 lao ba, 11 zha long and 1 lao zha (a village elder). From the point of view of provisional class categories, 4 are rentiers, 7 are rich peasants, 2 are prosperous middle-peasants, and 7 are middle-peasants.

(1) Relations with the Masses
These village chieftains are like parents to the people who, in addressing the "ba" and "zha" face to face, must use the word "bo" (which in Tai means "father"). Elderly or senior people in the clan are also addressed in this way. The masses have a figure of speech that says: "New born babies belong to their parents and the people of the village belong to the lao ba."

A section of the masses believe the chieftains manage affairs on their behalf, and this was especially the attitude to chieftains in power before Liberation. [The people] felt that they were seldom trampled upon by the Guomindang only because of the presence of the chieftains. When some of the chieftains suffered extortion and beating at the hands of the Guomindang, the masses believed that everybody suffered. Those people who have been in close contact with us have often been asked by the chieftains: "What did you say to those two Chinese?"

In religious matters, the chieftains are the ones who actively initiate offerings, and they often exhort the people that to lead a happy life they only need to worship Buddha. They also direct the village sacrifices to the spirits, and the people believe that after such sacrificial ceremonies they can avoid disasters and take in a bumper crop. The chieftains were also responsible for the distribution of village fields and the fields of the bo lang [godfather], the settling of disputes, and the handling of marital problems. Thus, the grass-roots chieftains had relatively intricate relations with the masses. There were, however, contradictions between the chieftains and the masses; in the past there have been incidents when the masses opposed the chieftains. Despite the fact that the chieftains exploited these incidents to scramble for power, these events still reflected the will of the masses. Four years after Liberation the consciousness of the masses has been raised and the dissatisfaction with the chieftains has become even more striking.

In 1948 the lao ba of Man Mai Long was entrusted by the entire village to take a petition signed by the people to the Pacification Commission requesting that the "bo lang" be changed. In 1945 Ba Jing Tai was also opposed by the masses (they did not want him), but these incidents were suppressed by the Pacification Commission. At present the masses of Man Nuan Dian are determined to get rid of Zha Kang Lang Yin and they have consistently reported [their view] to the People's Government of the Sipsong Panna Autonomous Region. A section of the masses wanted to cover up the retirement of Kang Lang Yin's ba long.

The chieftains that the masses would now like to get rid of include two lao ba and three zha long, the most senior chieftains of five villages. The reasons are: one of them has constantly been corrupt and is closely connected to a bo lang despised by the masses; one went to the bo lang before Liberation alleging that the masses said the bo lang was bad with the result that the bo lang fined the masses; another often harasses women, and; two of them act as chieftains but do no work. More than half the people have already stated that they do not want these chieftains....
The people are also opposed to chieftains who do not bear, or who try to reduce, their responsibilities. At a recent meeting of the people of three villages it was suggested that the chieftains go to cut wood (as material for the construction of the office of the People's Government of the Autonomous Region). There were three other villages who proposed that the number of chieftains should be reduced because there was less work, and that parts of the chieftains' fields could be given over to the masses.

The present conditions of the rule of the chieftains can be divided into three categories:

1. There are 5 villages where the power of the chieftains is relatively strong, where about 70% of the villagers answer to the chieftains. This includes the villages controlled by two village elders and one old chieftain which are characterised by: i) relatively long service by the chieftains and few changes of chieftains (particularly the ba and zha long); ii) close contact between the chieftains....

2. There are 5 villages where the power of the chieftains is relatively weak, where about 15% of the villagers answer to the chieftains. The characteristics of these villages are: i) many changes of chieftains and short service; ii) contradictions between the chieftains; iii) a previously bad impression of the chieftains among the people which has left a remarkably bad influence.

3. Villages in between the two extremes listed above, where about 30% of villagers answer to the chieftains.

(2) Relations Between Village Chieftains

In general, each chieftain managed their own affairs. Because some villages often changed their chieftains, there was no specific relationship between them. There were only two villages where the chieftains in power formed a "lao geng" [union of chieftains of the same age]. In contrast, there were villages where, because of disputes over land or irrigation which brought the chieftains of two villages into conflict, contact was broken and armed fights erupted.

Among the 20 village chieftains there were three whose prestige was relatively high. One was Ba Long Nuan Dian. His rank was high, he had served for the longest period of time, he had strong traditional influence, and other chieftains all came to seek his help in important village matters. He already has given up his duties, his prestige having declined. His prestige sank even lower after the establishment of state power in the villages. There were two others who were formal deputy heads of a village. They were selected with our [the Party's] support. One is a zha, the other a ba. Because they often take part in meetings, their progress is rapid and they are gradually gaining prestige. Already people often seek them out for resolutions to their affairs. Recently village heads made frank self-criticisms to the masses of their corrupt mistakes, and the masses reacted favourably to them. At the meeting the people assigned
work and criticised the chieftains, and the chieftains of each village obeyed them.

(3) Chieftains and the Pacification Commission

Relations between the chieftains and the Pacification Commission were rather close. They shared the same attitude on policy and on the raising of taxes. For example, Ba Jing Tai told us: "The Pacification Commission is the base and we are the pinnacle; if they reform then we also reform." When he had actively collected the taxes and propagated the general [political] line, the masses demanded that they not pay these taxes again. He enticed the masses by saying: "This year you pay and that is the end of it; next year you do not have to pay. Take pity on them (the bo lang) because they have no food; do not let them starve." When the [new] Government held meetings he would seldom attend, but would often go to meetings held by the Pacification Commission. The causes of the intimate connection between them [chieftains and the Pacification Commission] are: i) Because the chieftains collect taxes for the bo lang, the bo lang gave them additional fields (apart from the normal chieftains' fields) or a portion of the taxes, usually about 20 or 30 loads of rice; ii) The authority to appoint and dismiss chieftains was in the hands of the bo lang; iii) Because they were figures within the organisation of rulership, they held privileges in relation to the masses.

(4) Economic Conditions

The income from the chieftains' fields was generally about 300 loads of rice, and the chieftains possessed most of the farm animals. More than half of the chieftains would do business part-time, often trading in opium and engaging in smuggling. Their life was very prosperous, and there were very few who did not engage in business. Based on our initial understanding of the situation, their property, in the form of gold, silver, local currency and Renminbi [the currency of the People's Republic], there were two people who had more than one hundred million yuan Rmb, three who had more than fifty million, seven who had more than ten million and six who had more than five million. For example, X.X.X [name left out by editors] had been a chieftain for four years. He did not engage in business and his annual income was 200 loads of rice together with an oxen tax of 60 loads of rice. His wife had a sewing machine and they raised three pigs this year. He says his family has 3 liang [150g] of gold, which comes to 5.4 million yuan; 4 jin [2kg] of silver, which comes to 1.92 million yuan; 100 yuan of local currency, equivalent to 1 million yuan Rmb, and; 4 million yuan Rmb. According to his own account he has a total of over 12 million yuan, but in fact the figure must be higher. Those who do part-time business are even more prosperous.

(5) Condition of the Militia

Although there were militia organisations in the area under the direct jurisdiction of the lord, there were no fixed military personnel. There were, however, [soldiers] who did their duty at the Pacification Commission on a rotational basis. Their firearms were
provided by the chieftains of the Pacification Commission. The control over these militia was in the hands of the lao ba or bo lang.

(6) Political Attitudes

Following our four years of work and their own personal learning experiences, the chieftains have all made progress in their knowledge of the Party and the Government. There is a section of the chieftains who personally suffered from the extortion and beatings of the Guomindang, so that the dividing line between us and them has been completely erased. But since Liberation they have lost a certain number of privileges. Moreover, they were the grass-roots authorities of the lordship system (tusi zhidu) and embodied the essence of an exploitative class, so their progress has been severely limited. The majority of grass-roots chieftains, however, have all actively embraced the Communist Party and the People's Government. Each time their new life is talked about they are visibly pleased.

From: Daizu Shehui Lishi Diaocha: Xishuang Banna [Investigations of Tai Society and History: Sipsong Panna], vol. 4, pp. 24-29. Translated by Terry Narramore

* * *

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF KANG LANGZHUANG

Edited by Peng Xunzi

My name is Kang Langzhuang. I was born in the year 1283 of the Tai calendar (1921), in Meng Hai Yun Long. Those who are not familiar with me believe I am a native of Meng Hai Yun Long (or Chengzi), but actually Chengzi is just my family residence. My grandfather was a native of Man Jiang. He was a Lao Zha [village level chieftain] and was called Zha Peng Le. My father's name was Kang Langxiang. He came to Chengzi to "yu hei zhao" (to do corvŽe labour for the Lord) and it was then that he came to know my mother who was of leng nan [lek naui] class. My father was the son-in-law in my mother's family. ... [He] died when I was six years old.

At the age of eleven I entered a Buddhist temple as a "kui yong" (preparatory monk). I became a monk at twelve. My master when I became a monk was "Moyaweiluha," also my maternal uncle. He was at that time a practitioner of Tai medicine in Chengzi, so was known by the honorific title "Moyaweiluha."

I had been a monk only three months when, quite unexpectedly, my mother died. At the time, Dao Chengzong's sister had no children, so she took me in and raised me, and I continued on as a monk in the temple.

In the temple I concentrated on studying the sutras and would read the classics alone in my free time. The Lord at that time was Dao Liangqing. After he had come to worship and had seen me, he told Dao Chengzong that I did not have to return to the laity because I
read the sutras well and had a good understanding of scripture.

In 1941 when I became a Buddhist elder my master was Zha Kang Muzhen, whose Chinese name was Zhou Zhengrong.

After the year 1304 on the Tai calendar, the disasters of the War of Resistance to Japan came to Sipsong Panna. The Japanese had already arrived in Thailand and Burma, and they dispatched planes to bomb Meng Hai. Being afraid of the bombs, the people of Chengzi scattered themselves among the mountain forests. At the time there were eight Buddhist elders and over one hundred monks in the temple, as well as a bo zhan [monk responsible for village worship] by the name of Kang Lang Zhongmeng Gu. The Master of the temple was Zhao Hu Zhuangpian Songlieajiamoni. The Master was particularly fond of me because of my painstaking study of the sutras. So that the Master could take refuge [from the bombing], a thatched cottage was built for him in the mountain forest, and I stayed with him there. Many people also sought refuge in the area, so that I and the Master became "pa ba" (forest monks).

Soon, we returned to the village. My foster mother lived in straitened circumstances; there were many household chores that I simply had to perform. I felt a deep ambivalence. There are five precepts in Buddhist doctrine: 1) do not kill living creatures (especially oxen and people); 2) do not take liberties with women; 3) do not drink wine; 4) do not be deceitful; 5) do not steal. Although I did not offend against these five precepts, still, as I draped the yellow cloth (kasaya) around me, I thought that of the five great kindnesses of the world, "father, mother, heaven, earth and the Buddha," father and mother are the most important. However, I also thought that I was a disciple of the Buddha draped in that yellow cloth. On occasions when the air-raid siren would sound I would return home and scramble to carry things inside for my foster mother.... But, when I reflected upon the situation I felt an unfulfilled repentance toward the Buddha. I therefore decided that, in order to repay the debt of gratitude to my foster mother, I would not add to my sins before the Buddha and I asked to return to the laity....

After leaving the temple, I performed rites of respect before to the Lord, Dao Liangqing, the Bo Zhan, Meng Kang Langzhong, my master, Zhou Zhengrong and my foster mother and her relatives. By the Tai calendar this was already the ninth month in the year 1308 (November 1944).

After I returned to the laity, I worked the fields together with my foster mother. We worked the fields of the ling nan [lek naui] class for an annual tax of twelve loads [of rice] which was paid to Dao Chengzong. He was the "Nai Ling Nan Ha Na" (the chieftain who managed the affairs of the ling nan class). Every five days there would be a "kun meng" (all the chieftains in the region) meeting. The chieftains of the ling nan would eat in Dao Chengzong's home, using the rice that we had given to him. At that time each household also paid the sum of 25 yuan per annum. (According to Kang Langzhuang's
recollections, household payments were divided into: a "huo na dun"—payment of 25 yuan for a complete household; a "huo na gang"—payment of 8 yuan for a second level household, and; a "huo na nan"—payment of 3.5 yuan for a third level, small household).

In 1947 I married a Chengzi woman of the zhao zhuang class [distant descendents of the aristocracy who were given some land by the rulers].

In June 1949 Comrades Zou Kaifu and Yu Song came to Meng Hai to organise and expand their ranks. The two Bo Meng of the Council, the Xian Mu Meng Yan Dan Long and the Bi Wu Sha, then became much busier with official duties, and neither could keep up with logistics. As a result they asked me to join in their work. This marked the beginning of my participation in revolutionary work, and I still remember working together with Chinese cadres…. At that time the revolutionary troops had begun printing local paper currency and I was responsible for its distribution, with each person receiving 3 yuan as a form of pocket money. I remember that the former government of Meng Hai held local funds of 26,500 yuan and that this served as the backing for the printing of the paper currency.

When the communist troops retreated I and my wife divorced and separated. I had told my wife and her mother to leave the area. Because I was a soldier I was not able to leave the troops….

In February 1950 the President of the Council, the Zhao Guan (Dao Wenchang), told me I was to work as secretary ("kun qian") in the Council. Though I could be regarded as having formally become a secretarial member of the Council, I was certainly not given any title.

Not long after my divorce, I married a woman from Man Wang. Her father, who was a xian bo ban [a type of village leader], was relatively wealthy, possessing both an ox and a horse. He said to me: "You come back to the village to be like the common people and leave it at that. I will not allow you to be poor and you can do what you like, even go into business." I did not agree, but my wife did not want to stay in the town. Thus in 1951 we were divorced. At the time my wife was already pregnant, so I gave her money equivalent to twice the amount she had given me, and when the child was born I still went to her house to take care of her. (Later, she married into a family from Man Dong).

In 1951 Zou Kaifu was the Secretary of the County Party Committee while Dao Chengzong was the Head of the County. In 1952, when preparations were being made for constructing an autonomous region, there was much to be done and I was very busy. I was the nominal "kun qian" [secretary] of the Council, but in fact I was busy with the internal and external affairs of the county government; taking calls and receiving troops, all work of this kind would fall to me. Dao Jianlong was therefore sought to also act as "kun qian". At the same time I was given the title of xian qian (a xian level secretary) with an emolument of 120 jin of rice every three months, as
well as fields yielding 4 loads of rice, or, "na kun qian" (ricefields of the secretary). Dao Jianlong, Kang Langjian and myself were designated as three kinds of "kun qian," and we paid the above mentioned 120 jin of rice as compensation to the Council. Every month I was also given 6 yuan spending money (at that time Kang Langzhuang enjoyed the treatment given to cadres of the People's Government).

On January 23, 1953, after Sipsong Panna had implemented regional autonomy, the Meng Hai Council controlled by Dao Chengzong again conferred chieftains' titles. Since the preparations for a [new] government, I had been managing most of the Tai language documents for the Council and the county government. For example, at the time of the opening of the gate festival and closing of the gate festival in 1952 the submissions and ceremonial speeches from Meng Hai to the Royal Council of Jing Hong were all written by me. When the titles were bestowed, Dao Chengzong made me a xian su ta wa (meaning a profoundly erudite official), and wanted me to be secretary in the Royal Council....I went to see my old master, Xian Kang Muzhen, to ask his advice. He told me: "The old positions cannot be accepted because they exploit the people." Comrade Zheng Keqin, who was then working in the People's Government of Meng Hai, often came across me in his work...and he said to me: "You should not be a [new] chieftain because, later, the people will come to settle scores with you." Because I did not accept the position as chieftain, Dao Chengzong cursed me for being disobedient....

Some time later, Zheng Keqin related my circumstances to the Panna [Meng Hai] government's personnel section, and I was quickly transferred to work in the propaganda section of the government. The Chairman of the Panna government at the time was Dao Wenchang, while Comrade Wei Fan was responsible for the propaganda section. After working here for half a year, I was again transferred, becoming head of the government's general services section, responsible for purchasing. This year (1954) I was transferred to the Panna government's reconstruction section, and I managed forestry, the repair of roads and dams, and the like.

(In the spring of 1985 the editor was lucky enough to again meet Kang Langzhuang in Meng Hai Yun Long.... We talked tirelessly and I made the following record.)

I worked in the reconstruction section of the Panna government (which was later changed to a county government) until 1957. I was sent by the leaders to study at the Kunming Nationalities Institute, studying up to December 1958 when I returned for fieldwork. I went to Meng Han and the You Le (Ji Nuo) mountains to engage in "direct transition" [to new government]. In January 1959 the county government of Meng Hai brought me back to take part in work on the dams at Meng Zhe and Meng Bang which lasted until 1960. At the end of that year I returned to the county government office, working as a translator until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

In the Cultural Revolution I stood on the sideline because: first, my past was not clear; secondly, I had been a chieftain, and;
thirdly, I had been a Buddhist elder. Fortunately, I had never done any harm to anyone, so those who wanted to criticise and struggle could never really achieve anything. All along I could only "stand on the sideline" as the days slipped away like water down a drain.

In 1970 repairs were being done to a transceiver at the army barracks. I and many other cadres "standing on the sideline" went there to take part in labour,...and spent all the time moving huge rocks. Life at the time was very harsh; there was almost no food to eat and we drank tomato soup every day. In order to devise a way to improve our lives, I was chosen to go to buy vegetables. The reason I was chosen was that I was known to many people around the town and had done this kind of work for the county government in the past. As a result the vegetable farmers around Chengzi were all happy to see me and I could buy whatever they made available....

I retired in 1984. At present I am a member of the county political consultative committee and I do my best in whatever the government asks of me....


THE RELIGION WHICH PROTECTED THE SYSTEM OF FEUDAL LEADERSHIP
Ma Yao
[Note: in this translation the quotation marks used in the original text have been retained.]

1. The origin and development of "Worship" (ji) and "Offerings to Buddha" (danfo)

[The term Offering is a general rendering of the Chinese term "dan" which refers to charitable donations made to temples by the Dai minority to seek blessings and protection from calamities.]

(1) On "Spirit worship";
Currently, the religion of the Xishuangbanna Dai Minority is an amalgam of "worship" and "Offerings to Buddha", with the latter occupying the dominant position.

The Dai Minority refer to "worship" as "ling" and spirits as "diula". "Diula" are present in all places, with Meng having "Pimeng" (tribal spirits) and villages possessing "Piman" (communal spirits).

In the traditional accounts of each Meng, some "Pimeng" are represented by many different images, but it is readily apparent that these are actually the embodiments of the tribal chiefs. For instance, the Mengjinghong feudal administrative region is divided into three "long"; "Balongnuandian", "Balonglongkuang" and "Balongjingfeng". These three "administrative long" hold equal rank with six "guilong", each containing one or two "Pimeng" worshipped by the constituent villages.

Manyang and four other villages worship "Pimeng Zhaofalong", which translates directly as "Great King of Heaven". The "Great King of Heaven" is the "Baalawu" of the traditional accounts and was the first chief to enter Xishuangbanna.

Manda and four other villages worship "Pimenglongnan"; in the traditional account "Zhuijinlu" [Chasing the Golden Deer"], "Longnanpiya" was once opposed to "Baalawu" but Longnanpiya was
defeated by the Buddhist ancestor "Pazhao" and was relegated to being the great spirit "pimeng".

Jingzhu and three other villages worship two "pimeng", "Pimengbangpeng" who is accounted to be a "Mengjiao chief" and "Pimengtongyang" who is claimed to be a "Zhaopianling". [a High Commissioner for Pacification]. The villages of Manzhonghai and Manmo worship "Pimensuoao" who is also claimed to be a "Zhaopianling". The two villages of Mande worship "Pomenglatian" who is, by tradition, the younger brother of a "Zhaopianling". The three villages of Manmian worship "Pimenglongjingwei".

Generally, the "pimeng" of each Meng is the Dai chief who established the Meng, as in the case of the "Bule" (tribal ancestor) of Menglong; others were chiefs of ethnic groups which the Dai subjugated, as with the "pimeng" of Mengjingno who was a "Kaxixianmanma" chief. The "pimeng" of some localities intermingled with some of the lords of various rank during the feudal period. The four-yearly "lingpimeng" held in Menghai still retains the customs of using a bamboo arrow to kill an ox and using an ox-hide to boil food. This indicates that "Lingpimeng" originated prior to the appearance of iron utensils.

"Lingpimeng" is also termed "worshipping the Long" but in fact these two names are confused. "Worshipping the Long" is probably a loan-word from the Hani minority language, because the term "worshipping the Long" is commonly used throughout the the Hani areas of the Province and by those Dai with whom they have contact. "Ling" however, does not have such an equivalence, as the Naxi worship "Longshu" and are still at a stage of animism (the Dai of the Mengyang area also worship Longshu, indicating that they still retain some animistic customs). The Dai minority worship personified "spirits" This only occurred after the stage of worshipping ancestors and, until now, each family worships a "duilahen" and "family spirit" and already possesses an "ancestral" concept, as yet undifferentiated.

The Dai customs for the worship of "communal spirits" (lingpiman) and tribal spirits (lingpimeng) are still highly regarded and when outsider households are granted permission to enter the village commune, or when individuals visit or settle, they must first use wax sticks, chickens, wine and other such goods to worship the "zhai shen" [village spirit], as this is equivalent to registering as a household. On leaving the village, one must also worship and make offerings as a form of cancelling household registration. The whole village should worship and make offerings twice prior to planting and after harvest to pray for a bountiful harvest and to give thanks for the benevolence of the spirit.

Generally, a "lingpimeng" is held annually, but may occur three or four times a year. A nine-yearly service of worship is held for the greatest "pimeng", as when Jingzhen and Mengzhe jointly worship "Zhenhan". This "pimeng" was the first "zhaopianling" ("bazhen").

Due to their different historical origins, some "pimeng" are jointly worshipped by several villages, while other "pimeng" are jointly worshipped by the whole Meng. The joint worship of the "pimeng" by all Meng was the outcome of tribal alliances.

According to the above account, "Lingpimeng" are an important component of "ganmeng" and consequently, all the villages in each meng
hosting this worship are "Daimeng" which undertake "ganmeng" corvee duty. In Menghai, the "Daimeng" enclose the zhaomeng" (village headman) who participates in this worship in a room where he is not permitted to speak or move while an ox is slaughtered and offerings made, otherwise the "Daimeng" can box his ears. After the meat has been cooked, the persons of other ranks must beg from the "Daimeng" to obtain meat to eat. Those who are not of the "Daimeng" rank in Mengjingno must act as if stealing the meat, whereupon the "Daimeng" can curse them as "meat-stealers" and only after this can they eat. For each "lingpimeng" and "lingpiman" festival, the roads in the upland terraces [ba] and in the villages must be sealed (by inserting tree branches in the road) and if these are transgressed by persons from beyond the Meng or village then they are penalised goods similar to those offered during the worship in accordance with regulations. It is apparent from the existing etiquette that the primitive nature and regional character of the worship is strong.

(2) Regarding "Offerings to Buddha"

Accounts differ as to who brought Buddhism to Xishuangbanna, at what time and from where. According to popular accounts, the first preacher to arrive in Xishuangbanna was "Pazhao" (the Buddhist Master). In general use, "Pazhao" referred to a Buddhist elder of historical significance and to founding preachers, and did not necessarily indicate Sakyamuni.

According to the oral account given by the Huba of Mange in Mengjinghong (the Great Buddha of all Meng); more than one thousand years ago, there was a chief in Burma called Baanai who came to Xishuangbanna after converting to Buddhism. He constructed two white towers, one at the site of the present seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification [The term seat is used as a general translation for the pre-modern Chinese administrative term "jie" which denoted a town, in this case the one in which the High Commissioner was based] and another in Damenglong, where "Buddha's bones" and "Buddha's hair" were interred. According to traditional accounts, there were no temples yet and so Baanai lived on a mountain-top and came down to the mountain terrace each day to proselytise and so he was called "Paba" (meaning "the mountain-top monk"). In the 931st year of the Buddhist calendar (1569 AD) the "Zhaopianling" Daoyingmeng took a Burmese princess as his wife and only then was the first temple established in Jinghong.

According to Buddhist sutras in the Dai language, the eras were modified several times and included "Sanasaha", "Shahalun", "Shenlulashaha" and "Danmulashaha" etc. and eventually changed to "Milashaha" which was the Buddhist calendar epoch selected by the Xishuangbanna Dai.

Buddhist teachings entered Xishuangbanna only after an intense struggle. The traditional story of the rivalry between "Pazhao" and "Piya" (the "Pimeng" worshipped by Jinghong and Manda) reflects the conflict between Buddhism and the indigenous religion. According to classic accounts in the Dai language, there was a period when many people did not believe Buddhist doctrine. Due to the persecution of Buddhist adherents, a long period of internecine warfare followed. Only after the "Zhaopianling" took a Burmese Princess as his wife and constructed the first Buddhist temples did Buddhism begin to flourish in Xishuangbanna.
2. The confluence between Buddhism and politics

Once the ruling class realised that religious functions could be used for their benefit, politics and religion were melded. As with the "guilong" and "guimeng" discussed above, there was also a system of temples which paralleled the feudal administrative system of the Lord. The "Walong" at the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification was the largest Buddhist temple in Xishuangbanna and administered all temples within the domain. In the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification were also the two great temples "Wazhapeng" and "Wazhuandong" which acted as the important attendants of the "Walong". There was also a "Walong" located in each Meng at the city where the "Zhaomeng" resided. Under this "Walong" each level of administrative district; "Long", "Bo" and "Huoxi" possessed a central temple called "Walajiapen". Each level was controlled from above. The strict ranking of the Buddhist Superiors and monks corresponded to the feudal ranking: "Ajiamenli" was the highest rank of Buddha and only blood relatives of the "Zhaopianling" having the "Meng" rank could rise to this position. "Songlie" was the title given to the young Zhaopianling when he became a monk and when he ascended the throne he was called "Songliepablingzhao". "Du" meaning "Buddha" was divided into "Dulong" (great Buddha) being the Abbot of a temple and "Dugang" or second Buddha. "Pa" or monks were divided into "Palong" (great monks) and "Panan" (lesser monks). In addition there were "Keyong" or novices and children who had already entered the monastery but were not yet qualified to become monks.

Only those with a rank above "Huba" were qualified to be the Abbot of "Walong" located in the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification and, by precedent, they ought to be blood-relatives of the Zhaopianling. If persons of other rank took the position, they must acknowledge the Zhaopianling as "teaching father" and be promoted by him. Those below the rank of "Meng" could not attain the position of "Songling" or "Ajiamenli". For instance, the present Abbot of the "Walong" in the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification, the vice-president of the national Buddhist Association, "Hubameng", is a commoner and can only rise to the third rank called "Changkalazha".

Each rank of Buddhist temple is closely linked with each level of feudal political power. If the Abbot is not a blood relative of a lord of any rank then he must refer to these lords as "teaching fathers".

Above the central temples are "Wushulazha" Halls; organisations which convene meetings of the temples and deal with religious administration. Religious meetings are held semi-monthly below the "Meng" level. The interval between meetings of the "Mengwalong" is comparatively long and all are held within secret rooms; the "Hubameng" and important Buddhist elders congregate in the great Buddhist temple in the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification twice a year. As the power of the Zhaopianling has declined, the control of the "Hubameng" has also slackened and, at present, he can only control eight or nine temples near the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification. However, the "Huba" in each Meng still tightly controls the temples under his authority.

At the two annual festivals for opening and closing the door, the Zhaopianling and the "Zhaomeng" of each Meng enfeof each rank of headman and declare to the masses; "Before the Buddha, the person who
you have endorsed and favoured is raised in feudal rank and you should offer him your obedience, and what he asks of you should be done."

In the society of Xishuangbanna where religious belief and politics are combined, everyone "makes Offerings to Buddha", "Gives alms to the monks" and sends their sons to take religious orders. In the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification a woman stated in her prayers on giving offerings to Buddha: "In a previous existence I did not make offerings and in this life I have suffered and even my sons and daughters have encountered misfortune; as I now know the state of things, I wish to prepare an Offering to Buddha". In order to prepare a good offering, she expended herself in helping others with their tasks and in needlework, then spent all the gold coins she had amassed on a single offering. According to her, only in this way could she "have an easy conscience".

The Dai masses who sincerely believe in Buddhism consider making "Offerings to Buddha" to be an attonement for ones sins and as a "saving" for the future existence and also a "saving" for their descendants.

Consequently, in the seven festivals giving "Offerings for Buddha" held each year ("Offerings for the New Year", "Offerings for closing the gate", "Offerings for opening the gate", "Offerings for the stars", "Offerings for the plains", "Offerings for the hills" and "Offerings for the monks") many people willingly impoverish themselves and sell the items they love best to "Worship Buddha". In October 1954, Po Dianmen, a rich peasant in Manzhen Village, Menghai undertook a great "Offering to Buddha" which cost roughly 17,000,000 rmb (old currency). Among his offerings for "Worshipping Buddha" of particular note were five new sets of bedding and twenty silver bowls. He displayed these items in the Buddhist temple and by accounts, these did not compare unfavourably with the goods of the trade group sales section. In addition, he slaughtered two oxen and two pigs and offered more than 2,000 catties of rice. "Giving alms to monks" is termed "gonghao" in the Dai language and is considered the bounden duty of each family. Early each morning, the young monks carry rice baskets and call from outside the bamboo fences, whence a person comes downstairs immediately to place rice and vegetables in the basket. It is regarded as the duty of each household head to send sons to be monks. They consider that by becoming a monk one can learn the Dai language, understand "reason", raise ones social position, improve ones chances of finding a wife and, after death, others will chant scriptures and the deceased can "enter heaven". If ones sons and daughters do not take religious orders then others will show disrespect, to the point where little girls will sneer and label one a "yanling" (wild person). A boy enters the priesthood at eight or nine years of age and returns to lay life at twenty after receiving more than ten years of religious instruction.

3. Changes in religion in the early post-revolutionary period;

Following Liberation there was general improvement in the living conditions of the masses and in places where the basis for our work had been comparatively weak, religious activities re-emerged. For instance, there were a total of 1,014 Buddhist elders in Menglong, an increase of 292 over the 1948 figure. Throughout Meng, four new white pagodas and five rooms associated with pagodas were constructed,
19 temples were renovated (where thatched roofs were replaced with tile) or newly constructed and eleven dormitories for monks were built. Following completion of each temple an "Offering to Buddha" was generally held involving an approximate expenditure of 40,000 bankai, equivalent to 200 million rmb (old currency). The cost in labour expended is still to be calculated.

"Offerings to Buddha" are increasing with the improvement in living standards. An old man from Manmailong in Jinghong reflected that "three good things" had followed Liberation; "better food, better clothing and better Offerings to Buddha". Following the rumour of land reform in 1954, the various ranks of feudal lords were again motivated to take control of religious activities as a means of opposition. In 1954, religious activities in Menghai, Damenglong, and Jingzhen greatly increased. The Headman of Menghai, (name deleted from text) incited Manxing and Manzhen to hold two great Offerings to Buddha and personally attended the event held in Manxing. Much of the religious architecture within the Meng has been constructed within the last year and some is yet to be completed. At present, there are sixteen white pagodas. In 1954, a stage in the local religious activities in Menghai was completed and more than two hundred persons walked for two days to make Offerings to Buddha in the Jinghong seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification. In October, last year 5-6,000 persons from outside Meng participated when Jinghong prayed to the white Pagoda. Certain Lords took advantage of the occasion to spread rumours that "the Communist Party will revolutionise religion". When many of the masses met us they said "You can reform anything except religion".

It is worth noting that enemy agents have infiltrated the the monasteries to undertake activities. In 1954, leaflets favouring restoration of reactionary rule similar to that of the "Yiguandao" [A secret society which, "under cover of religious activities, served the Japanese invaders and the Kuomintang reactionaries" Hanyin Cidian, 1983] were found to have originated in the Buddhist temples. Last year, two "Buddhist elders" came to Menglong from overseas and taught the so-called arts of "Sword and spear cannot penetrate". They resided in the Buddhist temples of certain areas and we met one by chance during a trip to Mengban. In Menghun some people participate in an activity called "the Red Spear Society".

There has been a decline in religion in the districts where basic work has been comparatively successful and feudal power is weak. In Jinghong during 1954, very few persons made "Offerings to Buddha". In those places lacking schools, the various ranks of monks all go to attend day school and express dissatisfaction with the "moribund" teaching of the Buddhist monastery. Many young acolytes plan to leave the order and return to lay life and seek work or beg to be sent to Kunming for study purposes. In 1948, there were 140 monks and elders in the nine Buddhist temples within and around the seat of the High Commissioner of Pacification but their number had decreased to 81 in 1953 and 47 in 1954. The monks within the great temple of "Walong" have also declined. The "Hubameng" complained that "before my eyes, begging for alms, water-carrying and sweeping have all become problems".

In those interior Meng located along the lines of transport such as Lesser Mengyang and Mengjingno where the flower-waisted Dai
(who do not believe in Buddhism) and the Early Dai (who do not have a profound belief in Buddhism) live intermingled, the religious beliefs of the masses are growing daily weaker and it is difficult to find a Buddha. For instance, in the eight temples of the ten Water Dai villages within Mengyang there are only two Buddhist Superiors. In the whole district of Menjingno there are only three Superiors and already six Buddhist temples have collapsed.

In conclusion, the religion of Xishaungbanna reflects precisely the superstructure of the feudal suzerain economy and politics which was built on the foundation of the village commune. "Piman" (the commune spirit) embodied the group system of the village commune; "Pimeng" (the tribal spirit) embodied the expansion of these group systems, while the confluence of Buddhist proselytising with politics and religion reflected the growth and development of a higher unity comprised of the small cliques. "Worship" and "Offerings to Buddha" could co-exist and the activities of "Offering to Buddha" could still not entirely replace "Lingpimeng" (the communal spirit). For example, residents in the three villages of Manlu, Manfa and Manlai in Menghai have long intermingled and have a common Buddhist temple and the three villages jointly make "Offerings to Buddha", but the commune spirits of the three villages have remained separate.

For instance, "lingpiman", it is still the "pomo" who originally administered each village who officiates and each village member participates individually. According to their explanation, "The Buddha belongs to all, but it is not the same for ghosts." The conditions in Mankuan and Mangui in Manjinghong and in Manyindai and Manlang in Menghan. Rigid village boundaries are also reflected in religious activities viz. if persons of Village B trespass when village A is "worshipping the Long" they are penalised and must offer a similar sacrificial item. If an ox, horse or other livestock enters village A or crosses its bamboo bridge it will be slaughtered and one half sent to village A as a penalty. If those who carry items on a shoulder pole through the centre of other villages drop these on the ground they will be penalised and must render up half their load. If one passes through other villages with dishevelled hair or rolled-up trousers, or if the village has a corpse as yet unburied and outsiders unknowingly trespass through the village, these actions all incur penalties.

Statistical and Regional conditions of religion:
(1) Buddhist temples and religious figures; Based on the statistics for the 19 Meng, we surveyed 574 villages. There were 452 temples of varying size covering 80.14% of all villages. Based on the statistics for the 16 Meng (figures for Mengla were lacking), there were 17,512 households, 88,720 persons, of which there were 21 Huba, 698 Buddhist elders, and 4,183 monks of various rank: in total 4,902 persons comprising a mere 28% of all households and 5.5% of all persons, not including those who have returned to secular life.

(2) Religious expenditure; Two types of region can be roughly designated based on the numbers of religious figures and the strength of religious activities (in this classification we have placed more emphasis on current religious activities). The first category includes eight Meng; Menglong, Menghan, Menghai, Mengzhen, Jingzhen, Mengzhu, Mengman and Menga. In these areas it may have been that religious power was historically strong, as in Menglong and Menghan;
that there are currently more religious activities and that control from higher authorities was comparatively strong, as in Menghai, Menglong, Jingzhen and Menghun; or that a comparatively large number of monks were present, as in Mengwang (10.8% of the total population), Menga (8.3%) and Mengman (8.9%).

According to statistics for representative middle peasant households in Menglong, the annual religious expenditure for a single household approximated 940,000 rmb (old currency, as below), being equivalent to 1,880 catties of grain, and comprising 37% of the total agricultural earnings of this household and 28% of its total income.

According to statistics for representative middle peasants in Menghan, the annual religious expenditure for a single household approximated 660,000 rmb, being equivalent to 1,320 catties of rice, and comprising approximately 22% of household agricultural income and 16.9% of total income.

The second type is that found in the five Meng of Mengzhe, Mengsong, Mengban, Mengjingluo and Mengkang, where there are many monks eg. in Mengban (where they comprise 6.8% of the total) and Mengjingluo (6.7%) but where no religious centre has developed in the past and where no activities have emerged at present.

According to statistics for representative middle peasants in Mengzhe, the annual religious expenditure for a single household approximated 480,000 rmb, being equivalent to 960 catties of rice, and comprising approximately 15% of household agricultural income and 12.9% of total income.

Yet another type is that of Jinghong, Mengyang and Mengjingno where religious activities grow daily weaker. According to statistics for representative middle peasants in Jinghong, the annual religious expenditure for a single household approximated 400,000 rmb, being equivalent to 800 catties of rice, and comprising approximately 11% of household agricultural income and 7.6% of total income. Statistics for representative middle peasants in Jingno indicate that the annual religious expenditure for a single household approximated 285,000 rmb, being equivalent to 560 catties of rice, and comprising approximately 8.7% of household agricultural income and 5.5% of total income.


AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE MENGJINGHONG DAI MINORITY

Edited by Miao Luanhe et. al.

Conditions of land occupation and change within and between villages (ranks):

- Mengjinghong is the centre of feudal control within Xishuangbanna and the seat of the High Commissioner for Pacification. It contains 89 villages, comprising 14,484 persons in 2,867 households. Excepting both the "Meng" and "Weng" nobility in the seat of High Commissioner of Pacification, and the "Kahen" (Jianu) and "Kayuan" (Sinu); the peasant class of "Lulangdaoba" (descendants of the nobility), "Daimeng" (meaning "natives"), "Lingnan" and "Honghai" (together termed "Gunhengzhao", or domestic servants of the feudal
lord) consists of 3,717 persons (2,680 households) in 81 villages. The labour force of 6,619 persons comprises 47.4% of the total population and occupies a total cultivated area of 29,213 mou (this figure is a conversion). With the exception of lineage and private fields, there was originally a total of 120,404 na [According to Lemoine (1987:5), "na" means rice-field "and seems to have been used in some symbolic way disconnected from the actual land surface from which the dignitary would draw his benefice"], and the lineage and private fields for which "na" was not calculated totalled 3,250 mou. The total area is equivalent to 7,293.8 loads of seeds (one load being two baskets of rice shouldered on a carrying pole). Each household possesses an average of 10.2 mou. There are 270 landless households which comprise 15.9% of all households. There are a total of 3,304 oxen, being an average of 1.23 per household. 555 households (20.7%) however, do not possess oxen. In addition there are 3,871 cattle and 446 horses.

The "Meng" and "Weng" nobility in the seat of the High Commissioner for Pacification consist of 130 households, and, if the incumbent leaders of the all villages in the Meng (271 households) and the 508 households of previous village leaders are included, then these 909 households comprise 31.7% of the total. There are 546 monks and superiors, who form 3.7% of the total population, and 1,236 persons who know the Dai script (being 8.35% of the total).

As Mengjinhong is the seat of the feudal suzerainty, feudal political control is comparatively strong and so most land belongs to the Lords rather than the peasants. These great and lesser Lords comprise 13% of the population and occupy 56.6% of the land, with the remainder being held by peasants. These two large categories of land are actually only one, that of land belonging to the feudal lord.

A. Peasant tracts

(1) "Nahegun" directly translates as "lineage fields" and comprise 1,356 mou (4.64% of the total area). Most is occupied by the Dai Meng, with the Nan settlements, which were established comparatively early and have individual leaders, occupying a lesser proportion; for instance Manfeilong and Manjingdai, with the major concentration being the six villages (Manfan, Mange, Manwan, Manhe, Mannuan, Manda) of Longhui. Indeed, Manwan village consists entirely of lineage fields. The economic and living conditions in all these villages are backward by comparison with the situation in upland terrace areas. Until the present, barter has formed the major method of commodity exchange and there has been comparatively little contact with the outside world.

(a) Each lineage has a "Gaohagun" (a lineage leader) and generally the lineage elders are responsible for distribution and management of lineage fields. The "Gaohagun" undertakes to distribute or otherwise deal with land-holdings when households become extinct, migrate or create new households. The village headman has no power to intervene in these situations. If the "Gaohagun" is unable to achieve a solution, then a discussion meeting comprising only family-heads of the same will be held.

(b) Only blood-relatives who are within three generations and of the same lineage have the right to distribute and use "lineage fields". A son who establishes a separate household or a daughter who marries can obtain one share (limited to cases of village endogamy).
In principle, the elderly receive the larger, and youth the smaller portions. Similarly, men receive more than women. If, for instance, a family has two sons and a daughter, the field(s) will be divided into three shares, with the eldest son receiving two-thirds. The remaining one-third is also divided into three shares, with the second son receiving two-thirds and the daughter a one-third portion. In the case of divorce, the daughter ought to return with her portion. If the eldest son dies, his sons and daughters can only inherit one-third, as the remaining two-thirds is distributed among the paternal uncles and aunts. After three generations, a branch-line is established and it is no longer possible to divide clan fields of the preceding three generations. This is their clan code and the Clan leader must act accordingly. If the Clan leader is prejudiced, redress may be sought from the clan elders.

(c) The settlements in which the "Nahagun" is comparatively large do not welcome households from other areas. Not only do they have a village boundary (if, for instance, a son marries into another village he cannot take the "Nahagun") but within the village there are also clan boundaries which require that renting to tenants, mortgaging, buying and selling only occur among clan members. Consequently, there is comparatively little tenancy or pawning, and buying and selling are even rarer. If members of another clan open-up fields on the clan boundary, then the matter is handled in accordance with the rule that "that rent shall be paid for three years and the fields re-possessed for five. If the fields are not redeemed, the rental payments should continue".

(2) "Naman" or "nashang": "Naman" translates directly as "village fields", being public property of the village, and is also termed "nashang" or "nahuohen" meaning "encumberence fields" or "households' fields". These fields total 9,594 mou and comprise 32.84% of the total area. The "village fields" ought to have emerged after the "clan fields" and probably developed in order to share responsibility for public work or to reduce certain public burdens. With the change in village social organisation from a clan commune having blood ties to a regional association of rural communes, the distribution and use of land similarly broke out of the clan bounds and the "clan fields" gradually became the "village fields". At present, all village societies of this type are contained within the Lords manor. Renting land requires providing encumberence and, for this reason, "village fields" and "clan fields" are both considered to be "encumberence fields" or "public fields".

It is still possible to find some clues regarding the change from "clan fields" to "village fields" as a means of sharing responsibility for public works; in Mange and Manfan, which have "clan fields", if "the clan fields are rented out, the owner ought to assist in erecting a fence; otherwise the tenant need not pay rent". This year Manfeilong sought to divide the "clan fields" on the basis that everyone contributes equally to the burden of local finances and intra-village matters such as digging water channels and fencing are also undertaken in common, indeed, a "hagun" (clan) would be incapable of achieving these tasks alone. Consequently, the "nahagun" ought to be incorporated into the "village fields" for the purpose of division (in this village both "clan fields" and "village common fields" exist).
(3) "Naxin"; may be translated as private fields, and these comprise 1,894 mou or 6.48% of total area. The private fields originated after the "encumbrance fields", as is evident from their distribution. The private fields of Daimeng were developed in the vacant spaces surrounding the encumbrance fields and some were also opened up on the vegetable plots and fish-ponds. Some "Gunhenzhao" villages which did not have village common-fields were developed beside "polang fields" [see below] or within Daimeng boundaries. Once these were discovered they were unable to escape the burden. Those with private fields are mainly village headmen and old households who relied on special political privileges, to conceal their land because of their wealthy life-style and abundant resources, they were able to hire enough labour to open the vegetable plots and fish-ponds as private fields. The private fields within Manmailongba, for instance, resulted from requesting that the Hani minority re-form their fish-ponds. The village headmen and old households of Manda hired labour to convert park-land full of established trees to private fields. Although private fields can be mortgaged, tenanted or individually bought and sold, this is confined to the village.

B. The lands of the Lord

(1) "Fields of the High Commissioner for Pacification": generally referred to as "Nalongzhao" (fields of the great officials), these amount to 2,045 mou in Jinghong (7% of the total area). This includes 242 mou which was custom-farmed by peasants prior to Liberation, the remaining portion rendering rent-in-kind.

(2) "Polang fields": totalling 12,653 mou (43.31% of the total area). These were fiefdoms which the High Commissioner for Pacification disbursed among the great and lesser officials to provide financial remuneration during their employment.

(3) Private village fields: fields located in the private villages which were managed and administered directly by the High Commissioner for Pacification. They comprised 442 mou (1.51% of the total area).

(4) Fields of the Village Head: generally termed "Nadaokun" and totalling 1,229 mou (4.2% of the total area), these fields were taken from the village fields to give the incumbent village headman.

(5) Nalongda: "Longda" ("the eyes below") were persons who supervised cultivation or expedited rent for the Lord. The Lord gave the "Nalongda" a field which was also called "Nalongda". In Manjingfeng, for instance, there were 1.000 na of "Nadongnan" (the name of a field which formed a portion of Zhaopianling private village). The "Longda" of Manjingfeng Village repaired the grain store-house and so took 270 na as "longda fields" from the 1.000 na. Longda fields are generally given to the present village headman and to peasants who act as "longda" in individual villages.

The pillaging of the land from the peasants by the Lord was publicly-known from an early date but here we will add a further example: Manzonghai was originally a "Daimeng" village which possessed 2,370 na of "village fields". Following the murder of the High Commissioner for Pacification, all the people fled and 1,100 of the na became the fields of the the High Commissioner for Pacification. The remaining 1,270 na remained in the possession of the Longsa. As the Balong was in Mannuandian, this tract gradually came under the control of Balongnuandian and was rented to...
Manlongkuang and Manting villages. Manzhonghai village fell from being a "Daimeng" to being a landless "honghai".


** **

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VILLAGE CLASS STRUCTURE
Ma Yao

On the basis of a trail statistical survey of class conditions in 17 villages located in eight Meng and on our understanding of the general situation, we offer the following figures as a preliminary estimate of each social class and stratum in rural villages:

Feudal Lords (landlords) comprise 1-2% of all households, rich peasants (mostly village head-men) comprise 3-8%, middle peasants comprise 65-70%, of which wealthy middle peasants (mostly those whose status improved after liberation) form approximately 25% of this category; poor peasants comprise 14-18%, hired labourers comprise 8-10%, poor people comprise 6-8% and others comprise 4%. Due to differences in the development of each region and in our basic work there, great disparity exists in the figures for individual areas and the statistics above are only offered as a guideline.

(1) "Landlords" and rich peasants: Whether or not Xishuangbanna has landlords is an frequently debated issue. As there are also rich peasants and feudal lords it is extremely difficult to differentiate landlords in terms of class exploitation and this has raised debate on the existence of rich peasants. Under the feudal economy peasants lacked land rights and only had rights to occupation and use. Moreover, the peasants had not yet developed independent characters but had the nature of serfs. However, none of this affected the nature of the petty peasant economy, which was destined to break up. In legal theory, neither did the agents for the feudal lord who resided in the village and the rich peasants nor the general peasantry possess private land rights. This commonality did not prevent them from becoming actual landlords and rich farmers. This was because system of land rights could devise a structure which was invincible to capitalism. The village communes under the feudal lords could simultaneously produce peasant differentiation and a rich peasant economy. This is evinced by the special privileges and exploitation of unrewarded labour by the head-men of the Xishuangbanna village communes.

Under the feudal system, the village commune "system of collective ownership" did not permit free market transactions and the concentration of large holdings. Consequently, a class of landlords who transacted privately-owned land did not generally emerge and there were few rich peasants, but this did not prevent those village head-men who enjoyed special privileges from amassing large tracts and controlling them for long periods of time. The village head-men stated that "the land here is lively [huo de]; there are no landlords". They explicitly use this 'lively' method to dominate the land and advance their exploitation. For example, two head-men in Manzhen, Menghai hold hegemony over the religious fields, the village
public fields, the the fields of farmers lacking descendants household fields and uncultivated fields; in total eight times as much land as is owned by the masses, and in Manpei the laoba (a village leader) occupies 22 times as much land as the masses. The position of the head has been hereditary for the last 360 years and so they have occupied the village land for a long period. We attempted to ask if, given this 360-year history of land control, they could be deemed to be landlords? These head-men still represented the village in renting out land and in collecting and taking exclusive possession of large sums of rent as the "longda" of the feudal lords and they became the landlords who "managed the clan hall" and helped the landlords to "collect the rent and control the family". In addition there are a very few persons, in certain villages and areas where "nahagun" are more common, who are managerial landlords or rely on debt interest for their livelihood. An extremely small number of landlords have already appeared Menghun town who specialise in renting-out land.

Although the actual landlords have not yet legally obtained private ownership rights to land, they have already become a part of the clique of feudal lords. Feudal lords of higher rank are generally considered to be landlords in name only and the actual landlords are some of the head-men who currently hold power in the villages.

Over 80% of the rich peasants are village head-men. Exploitation by these rich peasants is a product of their special feudal privileges. The major methods by which they undertake to exploit are through the use of hired labour, such as the use of special privilege to undertake "bai gong" [unrewarded labour] (such as that of adopted sons and daughters, promotion of young monks to be "poyue" monks, and senior members of his wife's family acquired by marriage for the purpose of exploitation etc.) and through hiring of plough-oxen, offering usurious loans and, in the case of feudal lords, exploiting corvee labour and land rent. Semi-landlord rich peasants were those who rented out land which exceeded their own ability, or that of their hired labourers, to cultivate. The following figures are the exploitation based on calculations for 10 rich peasant households in Jinghong; from hire of plough-oxen (50%), from debt interest (30%), from land rent (10%) and from hired labour (10%). In Menghai the exploitation rich peasants derived from hiring labour was 55%, from hiring oxen 25%, from debt interest 15%, and from land rent 5%. In Menghan the figures were; from hiring labour (70%), from hiring plough-oxen (25%) and from debt interest and land rent (5%). In Mengjingno, exploitation from hiring labour constituted 81% of the total and from debt interest a further 5%. From these figures the exploitation associated with hiring labour and plough-oxen is apparent. With regard to the nature of exploitation by hiring of plough-oxen, the central government has decreed that "if a person hires an ox to a peasant and permits that it be fed by the peasant, that is to say that the owner does not engage in grazing but only receives a rental fee, then this constitutes a form of exploitation by bestowal of indebtedness". "Some people who possess no land or only a little and raise a herd of plough-oxen for the purposes of obtaining their sole or major livelihood from hiring fees should be designated as graziers when drawing class distinctions and their enterprise ought to be protected" (Draft supplementary National regulations regarding the designation of village classes”). According to this principle,
those rich peasants who hire their plough-oxen should be regarded as exploiters but as some poor peasants who have not been allocated land or who have lost their labour-force also rent-out their plough-oxen the matter of exploitation requires careful assessment.

Following the announcement of the general tack to be taken during the transitional period and especially the gradual domination of the market by State commerce, most of the rich peasants who had previously engaged in part-time commercial activities transferred to hiring labour and plough oxen and developed an interest in management following implementation of State grain purchase. In 1954 a rich peasant of Manzhen in Menghai sold his surplus grain for 10,000,000 rmb. Some rich peasants who totally depended on their special privileges for their advancement were relegated to the middle peasant class with the loss of these privileges; a condition more frequent in Jinghong. The rich peasants will certainly be limited after a policy of reasonable encumbrence is thoroughly instituted. Those areas where rich peasants are comparatively common are, for example, Mengzhe (9% of all households) and Menghai (11%) but for Menghan the figure is a mere 4%.

(2) Middle peasants; before Liberation the social strata of middle peasants was extremely unstable and also declining. Following Liberation the numbers of middle peasants increased rapidly and most possess 1-2 plough-oxen. The large proportion of the middle peasants cannot be disassociated from the system of land allocation. Due to the reduction in their burden after Liberation and to government support the status of the middle peasants is comparatively stable and approximately 25% have advanced to being wealthy middle peasants. As yet, none have become landlords but nuveau rich peasants have appeared in old villages in the Daimeg.

(3) Poor peasants; the major reason for becoming a poor peasants is not lack of land, although there are indeed poor peasants with little land or land of inferior quality; rather most are newly established or in-migrant households who generally lack plough-oxen and ready capital and so are exploited by fees for hiring oxen or interest charged on debts. Some also sell their labour. After receiving loans to purchase plough-oxen, many poor peasants rapidly rose to the ranks of middle peasants and so here the status of the poor peasants are also unstable.

(4) Hired labourers: Prior to Liberation, hired labour mainly originated; from attempts to avoid feudal burdens by returning apportioned land to village members, to lack of plough-oxen, unwillingness to accept land, among those newly established households not yet allocated land and therefore temporarily selling their labour, among those in villages with too little land to be apportioned a part, among widows and widowers who sold their labour and among the covert farm-hands of the village head (such as god-sons and adopted sons of monks). In most villages it was not difficult for hired labour to obtain land and many hired labourers have now already risen to the status of poor or middle peasants. Hired labourers are the most unstable and comprise 6% of all households in Jinghong, 9% in Menghai, 8% in Mengzhe and 4% in Menga.

(5) Poor people: these comprise about half of the landless population, roughly equivalent to the number of hired labourers, with the majority being widows or widowers lacking a labour-force.
According to village commune convention, these people have lost the ability to labour and have no right to request an allocation of land. Amongst them are some who sell a portion of their agricultural labour and focus on pedalling, selling their labour to undertake household tasks or managing small handicrafts (such as helping people sew clothes, rice processing etc.) and their livelihood is very unstable.

After Liberation, the village social structure became characterised by middle peasants, reflecting improvement in the livelihood of the people. The productive potential here is great, and there is a valid basis for the development of side-lines (animal husbandry, fish-raising and fruits etc.) and economic crops (tea, cotton, camphor etc.).


***

news from other universities

University of Washington
Professor Charles F. Keyes writes
"Mr. Shih-chung Hsieh is doing an ethnohistorical dissertation on the Tai. he has worked with our very extensive collection of Chinese materials here (the University of Washington reputedly has the largest collection of materials in Chinese on Yunnan outside China)."

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Professor Clark Cunningham writes that two Illinois students of architecture are currently studying the architecture of the Dai (and other nationalities) in Yunnan.

Payap University, Chiang Mai
Dr. Ronald D. Renard has sent us an extensive list of publications and work in progress at the university. Below are a few items:

Ratanaporn Sethakul et.al.
1985 Etnographic survey of Tai groups in the Ping river valley (in Thai)
Chuthamat Sonkanok and Chuleeporn Vimuktanont 1986 A comparative study of the society and literature of the Tai LŸ (in Thai)
Ronald D. Renard & Chuleeporn Vimuktanont 1987 Assimilation and adjustments of Tai LŸ in Mae Sai District (in Thai)

Book news
T'ien Ju-K'ang
1986 Religious cults of the Pai-I along the Burma-Yunnan Border Ithaca: Cornell
A review of this 1948 PhD thesis, recently published, is held over for the next issue.

Also note
Prakai Nontawasee (ed.)
Beyond small-scale representations, as may be found in atlases, maps of Yunnan are not generally available. Displayed at the recent Congress of the International Geographical Union (Sydney, August 1988), however, was an 'agricultural atlas' of the Naxi Minority Autonomous Prefecture, Lijiang County, north Yunnan comprising seventeen separable maps (1:250,000) each 50 x 70 cm. Discussion with the Chief Editor of this work revealed its importance as a benchmark for studies in south Yunnan; translation of the Preface will serve to indicate its usefulness.

The 'Comprehensive Agricultural Map Series of the Naxi Minority Autonomous Prefecture, Lijiang County, Yunnan Province' was undertaken in the Hengguan Mountain region by the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Comprehensive Scientific Investigation Team of the Chinese Academy of Science during 1981. Specialists in physical geography, geomorphology, soils, biogeography, forestry, remote sensing and cartography cooperated in its compilation. Seventeen maps were produced in response to requests from the leaders and relevant authorities of the Lijiang Prefecture and County covering physical conditions, land resources and the distribution of population, minorities, crops, and livestock. Each expert cooperated in a systems
approach involving analysis of Landsat images, topographic maps and other materials to identify physical geographic units which provide the base on which other material are super-imposed.

The series provides a scientific basis for evaluating resources, delineating agricultural regions and planning agricultural development. Experience has also been gained in the use of remote sensing and comprehensive mapping methods which are useful tools for future investigations of physical features, land resources and agriculture.

Fieldwork and mapping for the series was undertaken by Liao Ke, Wang Mingye, Gao Yixin and Wang Jinting with a team of some twenty persons under the leadership of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Comprehensive Scientific Investigation Team of the Chinese Academy of Science and with the active support of group-leader Li Wenhua. During fieldwork, the group obtained great encouragement and assistance from the Lijiang Prefectural Committee of Science and Technology and the People's Government of the County. Leaders in the Prefectural Committee, the Administrative Office, the County Party Committee, and County government, as well as workers in responsible Prefectural and County departments offered many valuable suggestions following completion of our first draft. We also wish to acknowledge and thank the Office of Agricultural Regionalisation, the Agricultural Bureau, Forestry Bureau, Livestock Bureau, Utilities Bureau, the Meteorological bureau and the Statistical Bureau for providing various research materials.'

The Map Series comprises the following: Administrative Divisions, Landsat Imagery, Topography, Physical Geographic Units, Geomorphology, Slope, Climate and Hydrography, Drainage and Water Conservancy, Vegetation, Soils, Land Use, Land Types, Land Resources, Natural Agricultural Regions, Population Distribution and Ethnicity, Distribution of Major Crops, Distribution of Major Livestock.

The content of each map is as follows:

Administrative Divisions: Boundaries for the hierarchy of village, district, county, prefecture and province indicated; several 'disputed boundaries' shown. Natural villages (cf. administrative villages) identified. Major and minor roads and footpaths shown. Prepared by Shen Hongquan and Cheng Xifang.

Landsat Imagery: Standard, false-colour image, possibly un-rectified. Major physical and cultural features are identified. Prepared by Qian Jinkai.


Physical Geographic Units: Hundred-odd different Units labelled numerically but without key. Prepared by Liao Ke.
Geomorphology: Four major landform classes (basins, river valleys, mountains, plateaux) subdivided into 21 types; 11 geomorphological features. Prepared by Wang Mingye.

Slope: Seven unequal divisions from less that 1 degree to more than 36 degrees. Prepared by Shen Hongquan.

Climate and Hydrography: Four maps (each 1:500,000) show (a) four agricultural divisions based on average daily temperatures, average temperatures for the hottest and coldest months, annual precipitation and number of months in which monthly precipitation is less than 30 mm. (b) average daily temperature equal or above zero. Solar radiation and duration (c) annual average precipitation (d) annual average run-off. Prepared by Zhang Yiguang and Li Jiyou.

map of xishuangbanna

2 LŸ script shown in the table is after Yu Cuirong and Luo Meizhen, Dai yu jian zhi (Beijing: Minzu Publishing House, 1980), p.106. (The script has recently been simplified.)