The Future of the Nation State

In the last number of the NEWSLETTER we argued that 'it would be fatal if Thai economic success created conditions which were used to devastate the resources of her neighbours'. This particular issue should be looked at in the broader framework of the relations between states in mainland Southeast Asia as we inexorably move into the unknown conditions of the 21st Century. The events of the last few months in Eastern Europe have demonstrated that the certainties of international relations of the last half century may no longer taken for granted. Even in our region, despite the intransigence of the supporters of the Khmer Rouge across the world, change, in the political climate, in relations between states and the definition and exercise of rights and obligations across national boundaries will not only take place, but be a matter of ongoing concern.

In that last number we drew attention to the ways in which Thai governments have sought to '...(define) her own boundaries ... (and) the geopolitical identity of Thailand'. In the last few weeks another chapter has been added to these endeavours with the signing of an agreement between the governments of Malaysia and Thailand and Chin Peng on behalf of the Communist Party of Malaya. Just as the events on the Lao and Burmese borders referred to in the previous issue, this agreement does not solve the problems of Thailand's southern border - but it goes a long way towards it.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think that these events looked at from a Thai point of view, merely establish the principles of the nation state in mainland Southeast Asia. There are many aspects to the investigation of the developing nature of 'the state' in mainland Southeast Asia, and in its first major publication the
Thai-Yunnan Project (in conjunction with the Institute of southeast Asian Studies, Singapore) attempts to look at one of these - the existence of ethnic groups across 'national' boundaries. [Notice of this book appears elsewhere in this number.] Of the six substantive studies in the book, three deal with ethnic groups in revolt against the government of Myanmar (Burma) and also

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represented on the Thai side of the border - these are the Tai (Shan), Mon and Karen. Comments that Ananda Rajah makes in his paper on the Karen could have very important implications for our future analysis of inter-state relations in the region. He suggests that in the period of rebellion the Karen have operated in many ways as a 'traditional' state lying between the areas of Burmese control and Thailand. 'Traditional state' here being a concept opposed to our contemporary understanding of 'nation state'.

The issues here are varied and complex, and all we can do is to suggest that in the exercise of political power intermediate regions have been an important phenomenon in the contemporary period and may be likely to be even more so in the future. If one may be allowed to talk of the 'classical concept of the nation state', perhaps it is already superseded in mainland Southeast Asia.

The test will be the future of Myanmar. Is reconciliation possible? Will the Mon, the Karen, the Kachin, the Tai, and all the other groups in rebellion against the government in Rangoon, be willing to give the republic another chance and under what conditions? There are many who believe the best that may be hoped for is a confederacy - and what could that mean? The future seems to presage
new formulations for the sharing of power.

Again, it is the Thai who appear to be leading the way - not of course with a view to the future but in dealing with the problems of the past. In the previous comment ('Identity and Integrity') we referred to the two towns on the Burmese border, Mae Salong and Ban Hin Taek (now Thoed Thai) former headquarters of Kuo Min Tang and Khun Sa. More recent information shows, among other things, that in both locations the Thai government has compromised in power-sharing to bring about the elimination of conflict. Both areas are policed by locally-raised militia - in Mae Salong completely under Kuo Min Tang control and in Hin Taek nominally part of the Por Chor Dor (Defence of Borders) administered by the Ministry of the Interior, but in fact recruited and controlled locally. But Thai cultural penetration proceeds apace with local co-operation. Schools in both are now part of the national system and teach the national language - in Mae Salong the language was Chinese till very recently. The Thai wat was built here only two years ago and it was only a few weeks ago that the Princess Mother laid the foundations of the cedi.

The dedication at Ban Kriangsak in Mae Salong
General Kriangsak Chamanan, Prime Minister, has show intelligence and ability in the administration of the nation (which he has administered) with integrity and justice since BE 2513 eight years without interruption. He has shown great generosity and sympathy for the people of this district in helping the people of this region in the improvement of the economy and products which has brought security to this border region. This has bestowed great improvement in the livelihood of the populace and brought them happiness and relieved them of suffering brought by their wanderings. This has been a great boon to all inhabitants. We have therefore united to build this house as a token of our remembrance of his goodness, our respect and love. Let it be known in future as the 'House of Kriangsak'.

The citizens of Ban Mae Salong have united together to build this house as a sign of our respect.

Nai Tuan Si Woen
With great respect
[trans. G.W.]

* * *

FROM PEASANT TO RURAL TRADER:
THE OX-TRAIN TRADERS OF NORTHERN THAILAND, 1855-1955

Chusit Chuchart

The purpose of this paper is to examine the institution of 'village trader' or 'ox-train trader' in North Thailand during the period 1855-1955. It is an outline of research on this subject using
both documentary sources and interviews. Material was gathered from
documents in the National Archives, from the reports of European
travellers in North Thailand during the 19th and 20th centuries, and
from other secondary sources.

Interviews were conducted with over sixty persons who had
either been engaged in this trade or had connection with it. Most of
these people live in the provinces of Chiangmai, Chiangrai,
Maehongsorn and Nan. Chiangmai was the major trading centre of the
western part of the northern region (Uttaradit being the centre for
the east). Land communication in Maehongsorn and Nan developed much
later than in the other provinces, so that ox-train trading continued
till quite recently, and consequently it was much easier in these
provinces to find people who had participated.

The people concerned were largely villagers engaged in peasant
agriculture who became traders when the harvest was over, though some
were engaged in trade the whole year round.

The latter too were owners of rice fields but would rent out
their fields for others to cultivate, or, if they decided not to trade
in any year, would cultivate themselves.

The questions worth investigating are, first, why did these
individuals leave the security of their villages to trade in the
towns, and to what extent did this activity improve their status above
that of the ordinary peasant? To what extent did the traditional
political and economic system, the culture and modes of thought, act
as obstacles to their activities? We may also consider whether any
general principles underlie the answers to our questions.

The reasons the years 1855-1955 are specified are:
1. In 1855 Thailand entered a period of relatively free foreign trade
with the signing of the Bowring Treaty1 between Thailand and the
United Kingdom. The treaty brought to an end the system of Royal
trading monopolies under which the Royal Treasury was the only
institution empowered to engage in foreign trade, and allowed much
freer trade between Thai nationals and foreigners. Northern Thailand,
during the period 1774-1884, was part of the Principality of
Lannathai,2 a dependency of the Kingdom of Siam and the effects were
felt in Northern Thailand as well (Chusit 1981).
2. After 1855 Thailand changed from a basically subsistence economy to
one based on trade in rice, teak and tin, and at the turn of the
century they were still the main exports. Imports were mainly
ready-made goods such as clothes, metal tools and equipment and fuel.
Goods reached North Thailand by two routes (Chusit 1980:48-60; Suthy
1975:261-269) -
2.1 The route from Moulmein through Tak, Lampang, Lamphun,
Chiangmai, Chiangrai, or from Moulmein through Tak to Maehongsorn.
These routes used ox-trains or horse-trains or a combination of
bearers and boats.
2.2 The route from Bangkok was by water. Boats came up the Chao
Phraya past the Mae Nam Ping to Pak Nam Pho in Nakhorn Sawan province.
From there the goods were distributed to the various parts of the
north again by boat. One major route from Pak Nam Pho was along the
Nan River, through Uttaradit to Nan. Ox-train traders met the boats
at their destination and bought goods for resale in the villages.

3. After 1855 the political system too underwent changes in step with
the economic changes. Slaves were freed between 1874 and 1911 and peasants freed from serfdom between 1905 and 1917, enabling the development of a free labour force in a capitalist system. The peasants, once freed of the traditional obligations of serfdom, were free to pursue their own livelihood, and this too had its effects on the development of inter-village trade and the ox-train traders.

These events all contributed to the development of the ox and horse caravans and the river trade - particularly during the years 1855-1910. But during the 1910s there was some decline due to the introduction of the railway and motor vehicles to the northern region. The old pattern of trade slowly began to disappear.

The origin of the ox-trains

We may speculate that trading with ox-trains occurred in the time of King Mangrai (13th century) and before, though there is no clear evidence. In The Laws of King Mangrai there are references to the use of bearers, carts and boats in trade (Prasert 1978:59-62), but there appears to be no reference to ox-trains. But in The Teachings of Phaya Mangrai there is a reference to such trade. The line may be translated, 'If you trade with oxen, make sure your goods and equipment are in order' (Sommai:14). In the manuscript Mangsarop Chiangmai, a work concerning the forcible resettlement of the citizens of Chiangmai in Burma by the Burmese king in 1615 and written two or three years later, there are many references to ox-trains (Singkha 1979:58, 61, 73, 77, 84).

Though these references seem to indicate that the use of ox-trains for trade and transport is ancient in the region, before the 19th century the political and economic structure of Lannathai society placed many limitations on their use, as we shall see in a moment.

Reasons for the use of ox-trains in North Thailand

On the evidence available, there seem to have been only two regions of Thailand in which ox-trains were used before the development of modern communications - these are the North and the Northeast (Charnbutr 1977:34-35). The reasons for this are as follows -

1. Geographical constraints: North Thailand is a heavily-forested, mountainous region with numerous inter-montane basins (Sawart 1978:31; Pendleton 1963:40) which are the main centres of population. Between muang, and even between villages, mountains and forests prevent easy communication. Before the development of the road and rail system, the only effective means of transporting goods between neighbouring population centres was through the use of oxen (and other pack animals). Even cart tracks were rare or non-existent. Villagers kept cattle for ploughing so these were already available when required. Training cattle for use in ox-trains was not a difficult task. No more than a week was required. It was not surprising that when the circumstances were favourable the use of ox-trains rapidly increased throughout the villages of the north.

2. Political constraints: The economic and political organization of Lannathai society before the end of the 19th century, the relationship between the capital and rural villages, between the rulers and the serfs, placed the latter in a situation of great inequality. A share of what the serfs produced had to be given to the lord as tax (suai
or phasii). In addition to this, he was liable to be conscripted to provide labour (Chusit 1980:22-29). Serfs had no rights in land or other natural wealth such as mineral ores, forest timber, or other forest products (Wanchali 1977:77-105). All these were the property of the ruler of the muang, caw muang (Prasert 1978:110-119).

The various taxes which the caw muang collected were not put to public use in the sense that they went to provide a productive infrastructure - e.g., roads, reservoirs, dams and canals. Irrigation works, since the time of King Mangrai or before, were built by the communal efforts of the populace or through conscripted labour (Tanabe 1975-6:73-7; Wijeyewardene 1965:258-9). Taxes were used for the defence of the muang, for religious purposes or for the requirements of the palace. Up to the 18th century there were no roads, no dams, etc. These began to be provided at public expense only during the first half of the 19th century.

With the absence of roads between cities and between cities and villages, the ox-trains were the most important means of transport and trade.

3. The need among villagers for the supply for certain kinds of goods: Before the liberalization of trade with Europe during the middle of the 19th century, Thai villages were mostly self-sufficient, producing most of what they required themselves. There was some barter and exchange of goods, but this was limited to goods which they had difficulty acquiring themselves, such as salt, metal tools, earthenware, and luxuries desired by the nobility and urban trading families in the cities, such as gems and silk (Chusit 1980:31-39, 60-66; Suwit 1979:73-4). Demand for such goods engendered some trade involving most villages. Trade and the demand for foreign goods were, however, given a massive boost by the introduction of freer trade with Britain in 1855. The use of ox-trains for trade, which existed in a modest way before the second half of the 19th century, began then to slowly increase in volume.

The status of the ox-train traders

The ox-train traders were rural traders. They lived in villages and though trading was in most cases their primary occupation, their secondary occupation was agriculture. Some traded almost all year round, though between the months of July and October the heavy rains made trade difficult and many stopped. This type of trader did not engage in rice cultivation himself, but hired others to cultivate his fields. Trading was a more profitable enterprise than rice cultivation, yet in some villages the ox-train traders only operated after the harvest was over. Not all villages in the north had ox-train traders and in those villages which did engage in such trade it was usually about three or four men who were involved. There were a few exceptions, special villages in which many of the inhabitants were engaged in the trade. The village of Pa Ngiw in Ban Pa Pong, Doi Saket district (Chiangmai) was engaged in the miang (pickled tea) trade, and was such a village. The villages of Makaphot and Chiang Khaeng in the Muang district of Nan Province bought mineral salt from the tambon of Bor Klya North and Bor Klya South in Pua district and transported it for sale in the Muang (urban) district of Nan. (This trade was extensive before 1950.) The villages of Muang Porn, Ban Pang Mu, Ban Khun Yuam, Ban Mae La Noi and Ban Mae La Luang
of Masehongsorn Province were mainly inhabited by Shans who engaged in trade between Chiangmai and Mae Hongson. (This trade was extensive till 1960.)

The economic position of these traders was better than that of their fellow villagers. They possessed better houses, more rice fields and larger swiddens than others of roughly their place and time.

Ox-train traders were mostly conservative in their opinions. They were bound up in village society and had no desire to expand their economic activity and operate within the city. They were too overawed by the unfamiliar things they saw. They were also probably deterred by the use of conscripted labour in the urban society and the higher level of taxes. (This was before the changes in the economic and political structure in the early 20th century.) Even today, though circumstances have changed, people's psychology remains the same - many are not willing to leave their villages and live in the city. Capital for these trading ventures was provided by the traders themselves. For the most part the idea of borrowing money was not congenial to them, as they did not like the idea of being in debt. In some villages there were those who lent money, but interest rates were very high, and generally it appears that traders did not borrow capital to finance their trading enterprises.

Like other members of their society, ox-train traders believed in merit and karma. Merit acquired in this life would have its reward in a future life, or even later in this one. Likewise, good fortune was the result of merit acquired in some past life, or earlier in the present incarnation. More pragmatically, they believed that action brought its own rewards. The diligent and industrious became rich; the lazy remained poor. But even these attitudes were ultimately based on the foundation of a belief in merit and karma.6

The organization of the ox-trains

The ox-trains had not merely to travel from one town to another, they had in the process to cope with a wild countryside made up of forests, mountains, valleys and passes, all inhabited by many kinds of dangerous animals. The caravans were therefore usually made up of many traders travelling together. The company would be made up of 3-5 nai hoi or ox-train traders [nai hoi - employer, lit. 'master of a hundred'].

Each nai hoi would have 10-60 oxen, sometimes as many as 100. Each ten oxen needed one man to control them. A trader with 100 oxen would have nine employees, he himself taking charge of 10 beasts. Caravans were composed of different sized teams, some having more, others less. The trains travelled at a speed of about 3 kilometres per hour, though on level ground they might travel somewhat faster. When compared with horse-trains, they were much slower and their ability to cope with steep, high terrain was much less. Horse-trains perhaps averaged about 4 kilometres per hour.

Ox-trains set out very early in the morning, about 5.30 am, and stopped about 10.30 am. That is, they travelled about five hours a day and then stopped to prepare their food and allow the oxen to graze. Oxen could be used between the ages of 3 and 35 years and usually carried weights of around 100-140 pounds (44.6-62.5 kilograms) (Hallett 1890:210-213). Some traders might load their
animals with as much as 65 kilograms, but usually about 50 kilograms. The cost of an ox was about 20-40 baht during the period 1932-1945. After 1945 the price rose rapidly and in 1956 an animal cost between 800-1000 baht.

The major articles of trade

Before the mid-19th century there was probably not much trade in the north of Thailand, as villages tended to be mainly self-sufficient. Each village provided most of what it needed and it was only those things which the village could not produce itself or find in the neighbourhood, that were traded. Of these the major items were salt, metal tools, ornaments, silk and such goods (Chusit 1980:31-39; 60-66). Luxury goods for the most part were traded in the cities rather than in the villages.

After the British trade agreement with Burma in 1826 (Maung Htin Aung 1976:137), ready-made goods from Britain entered Burma at an increasing rate. Some portion of these goods crossed the border and were traded in neighbouring North Thailand. Traders brought ready-made goods in from Moulmein (Thipakorawong 1961:196). In order to facilitate this trade, in 1856 the Thai and British governments reached an agreement on the types of currency that could be used. The rupee, baht, gold and silver ingots were all recognized as legitimate currency in the trade between British traders and the inhabitants of North Thailand. The rupee and Thai currency thus became the main mediums of exchange, replacing the old barter system.

Trade between Britain and Thailand expanded rapidly after the Bowring Treaty of 1855. Britain exported to Thailand woven cotton goods, fuel, metal tools, etc. Bangkok was the centre of distribution, and North Thailand received these goods by way of the Mae Ping, Nan, Wang and Yum rivers. The goods which came up by boat were sold in the markets of the towns and large villages which lay close to the rivers (Chusit 1980:57-63), while the more distant towns and villages were served by the ox-train traders who bought goods for resale.

The goods most sought after by the inhabitants of the north during the latter part of the 19th century and the early 20th century were of three kinds:
1. Factory-produced goods such as ready-made clothes, cloth, thread, kerosene, matches, candles and metal tools. The sale of these goods in the villages destroyed many local industries (Chusit 1980:31-41; 64-7), as the villagers stopped planting cotton, and weaving, gave up the use of fuel from plants and trees, and used kerosene instead for lighting.
2. Goods which the villagers could not produce themselves and had to buy from other areas, sometimes near, sometimes a distance away. The most important of these was salt. Villages in the hills also required dried and salted fish.
3. Luxury goods such as cosmetics, alcohol, cigarettes, silk and ornaments. These things were sold mainly to the nobility and traders in the towns, rather than to the farmers in the villages.

The major trade routes of the North

The routes used by traders to bring factory-made goods to the towns and villages of North Thailand fall into the following three
groups:
1. The land route from Moulmein. This route passed through Mae Sot, Tak, Hod to Chiangmai. From Chiangmai it continued to Wiang Pa Paw, Chiangrai, Mae Sai and then to the Shan States of Burma and Yunnan in China.

   Chiangmai was the important centre for this route. From here routes led to Lampang and Maehongsorn. There were routes connecting other towns with these centres and with each other. Besides Thai traders, there were also Shan and Yunnanese Chinese (Hor) traders. The latter mostly used horse-trains (Hallett 1890:170-2; 213).

2. The river route from Bangkok to the north. There were two important rivers involved in this route:
2.1 The Mae Nam Ping which had Chiangmai as its trade distribution centre;
2.2 The Mae Nam Nan which had Tha It in Uttaradit Province as the main distribution centre for the north.

The river routes connected with the ox-train trade routes, the main products supplied to the traders from Bangkok being clothes, thread, kerosene, matches, candles, salt and dried fish. All boats came up the Chao Phraya to Nakhorn Sawan. Here they branched either up the Mae Ping or the Nan to Chiangmai or Tha It. Ox-train traders from Maehongsorn or Chiangrai for example, would buy goods from the boat traders at Chiangmai for resale in more distant towns and villages. Traders from Nan, Phrae or Phayao would do the same at Tha It. These traders would bring goods from their home base or buy from towns and villages on the way, either for sale along the route or to the boat traders who would take the goods back to Bangkok. The goods involved in the return trade were animal horn, animal skins, lac (krang), honey, sappan wood (maifang), and cutch (siisiat). These goods were either forest products or the produce of their own village.

Prices and profits
Trading with ox-trains often involved long and difficult journeys; for example, the journey between Mae Sariang and Mae La Noi districts of Maehongsorn Province and Hot district in Chiangmai took ten to twelve days. Traders would buy fish sauce in Hot at 1.25 baht a bottle (1947 prices) and sell in Mae La Noi at 3.50 baht a bottle. They would buy salt at 5 baht for twenty litres and sell the same quantity at 25 baht.

In the trade between Sa-Moeng district in Chiangmai and the urban district of Lampang, traders bought kerosene in Lampang Rs. 5 for a twenty litre barrel (1918 prices), transported it to Chiangmai, a journey of about four days, and sold it in Sa-Moeng for Rs.20. The high price was justified by the difficult terrain that had to be negotiated.

Information from other areas was similar - i.e., traders would sell goods at 2-5 times the price they paid. The justification for these high margins was the difficulty of the journeys, the time taken and the amount of capital at risk.

The customers in any particular village, too, were not numerous. In the period 1910-1930, villages ranged in size from 20-40 houses and, assuming an average household size of six, populations of between 120-240 persons. The quantity of goods that could be traded was limited, and consequently profits also limited.
The end of the ox-trains

The use of ox-trains for trade probably goes back to the time of King Mangrai. The period of its greatest development, particularly as a consequence of trade with Britain, began in the 19th century. The Moulmein-Chiangmai route was the most important in this trade. The early years of the 20th century saw a rapid development of land transport. In 1914 the northern railway system reached Lampang, in 1921 Chiangmai. There was in addition the development of the road system between the bigger towns. In 1914 work commenced on the roads between Denchai and Phrae, Lampang, Phayao and Chiangrai, Lamphun and Chiangmai. The progress of this construction, however, was slow, as there were continual problems with funding (Chusit 1982:54-6; Phornphen 1974:34). The road systems linking villages to towns fared even worse. Thus, though the building of the road system began in 1914, the ox-trains continued well beyond that date, to a decreasing extent, but well into the 20th century.

The First National Development Plan (1961-66) and the Second National Development Plan (1967-71) saw the rapid development of the road system linking towns to each other and villages to the towns. The long history of the ox-trains came to an end, being replaced by the swifter and more convenient road and rail transport.

The ox-train traders went back to rice cultivation. Of the 60 or so ox-train traders interviewed throughout North Thailand, only five (about 8.3%) continued to trade in a small way around the villages. Nevertheless, these ex-traders had a better economic position than other rice farmers, though they were less wealthy than their fellow traders in the towns. They were respected by their fellow villagers and were often chosen as headman, kamnan, and irrigation headman.

The ox-train traders were rural traders who came from the ranks of the rice farmers. They engaged in trade after the harvest in order to improve their economic position. The institution continued for well over a hundred years, probably much longer. The trade continued over many generations, based in the villages, for the traders were unwilling to leave their homes for the unfamiliar surroundings of the towns. It could also have been the strong attachment to the culture of the rural village which kept them there and prevented them from becoming big traders or big capitalists like the merchants of the city. When motor vehicles replaced the ox-trains, the traders had to return to an agricultural life as their capital resources did not allow them to venture into motorized transport. Motor vehicles required as much as 10 or 15 times more capital. Their fear of the cities and lack of capital also prevented them from re-establishing themselves as traders there. There was little they could do but go back to their old way of life in the village. They went from farmer to ox-train trader, and finally back to farmer again when the ox-trains were superseded in the mid-20th century.

Translated from the Thai by Gehan Wijeyewardene

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Seminar Report

The Thai-Yunnan Project held an informal seminar on "Thai health care Ñ past and present" on Thursday 23rd November. Participants included Prof. Serge Genest, a medical anthropologist from Université Laval in Quebec, who is currently visiting the Project, Dr Jean Mulholland, of the Australian Institute of Health, Dr Anthony Diller and Dr Baas Terwiel, of the Faculty of Asian Studies, and Cholthira Satyawadhna, Julia Byford and Scott Bamber, of the Anthropology Department.

Prof. Genest is going to Chiangmai in December to conduct research on patient-doctor communication. Scott Bamber is planning to commence a study of health care among Tai peoples in Sipsongpanna in early in 1990. The purpose of the seminar was thus to provide a forum for the discussion of some of their ideas prior to starting fieldwork.

Scott Bamber presented a short paper outlining some of the recent history of Chinese health care policy in relation to minority peoples, and drawing some parallels with the case of the state-recognition of regional diversity within Thailand. In the case of both China and Thailand, medicine was seen to have been used for political purposes, as a means of legitimising the position of the state and establishing control over regional areas.

Serge Genest spoke from the perspective of a long experience working on medical anthropology in Africa. Reviewing the literature on biomedicine in Thailand, he noted the apparent wide acceptance throughout the country of modern health care, which is unusual for a developing nation. Possible explanations for this rapid acceptance, he suggested, might lie in the interest shown by members of the royal family in Western science dating from last century, and in the participation of women in the health care system.

From the discussion following these presentations, it was apparent that the field of Thai health care encompasses a diverse range of issues. Subjects raised included the role of women in the Thai health care system, "medicalisation" and the manipulation and negotiation of health, the political economy of health under communist and capitalist states, the role of culture-specific practices such as tattooing in the transmission of disease, and the methodological difficulties involved in conducting health care research on Tai minorities in China.

S.B.

* Preliminary Notes on Health Care in Sipsongpanna
Scott Bamber

Introduction

This project is basically a study of health care among the Lǚ, a Tai people of whom there are some 226,000 living in Sipsongpanna (Xishuangbanna), in southern Yunnan, People's Republic of China. The focus of the study is the interaction between traditional Tai Lǚ beliefs and practices, and the health care services provided by the Chinese state.

In practical terms, the study will involve research in two main areas, the first consisting of a survey of state-provided health services in Sipsongpanna, and the second an examination of the health care beliefs of the Tai Lǚ people. This would include the use of, and attitudes towards, institutionalised medicine, such as the facilities provided by the state, as well as traditional practitioners. It would also encompass less-formal aspects of health, which are for the most part centred on the home, such as 'first-aid', diet, personal hygiene, and water use.

Because of the little information available on this aspect of Tai Lǚ culture, and the opportunity it presents for the comparative study of health and medical practices of Tai peoples elsewhere in Southeast Asia, this part of the project would be valuable in itself. However, there are a number of other reasons why this type of information is useful, in the broader contexts of medical anthropology, and of Thai studies. In both of these fields, a common issue is the position of minority groups in a health system set up by the dominant population. By way of background to the project, I will here say something of the relationship of these themes to health and health care in Sipsongpanna.

Tai Lǚ and the Chinese Health Care System

Although much has been written of the Chinese rural health care system, little appears in the literature about the position of ethnic minorities. The Chinese health system has been generally cast in terms which make it appear rather monolithic: both illness and medicine are seen as tangible entities, with little acknowledgement given to regional or cultural differences in the way they are perceived. Thus, for example, while it was stated officially that the traditional medical systems of non-Han groups were also to be included in the training of barefoot doctors, it is difficult to find any detailed information about the interaction between the state and minority medical systems.

The information which is available from Chinese sources is written from the State perspective, and is mainly concerned with lauding the improvements which have taken place in health in the region since Liberation in 1949. Thus in one account of health in Sipsongpanna there are copious references to 'pipa devils' (phiipaa), exorcisms, 'benevolent water' [naam mon] and 'evil vapour' (lomphit [?]). This source also mentions the training of Dai (Tai Luby) people as barefoot doctors, at the production brigade level, as well as at more highly trained levels, as midwives and fully qualified
Although mention is made of some attempts to integrate traditional practices with the State health care system, the official approach to Tai LÝ health care appears to have been primarily in keeping with the prevailing Party ideology. As expressed by the anthropologist Fei Hsiao Tung, this runs as follows: Some customs and habits of certain minorities resulted from their backward modes of production and stood in the way of social progress. Certain nationalities had various taboos because medical facilities were lacking.

By implication, then, the medical services provided by the State were considered to be superior to traditional practices, and the State had the right to determine which traditional beliefs and practices were acceptable. Traditional beliefs and practices were tolerated as expedients, pending the transformation of the minority cultures.

An important factor affecting state health policy in these regions was that Sipsongpanna was a frontier region. These southern frontiers were the last areas to be 'liberated' by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and even after control of major cities and towns was established in 1950, parts of the region remained insecure until 1955. Consequently, the frontier regions were the site of intensive efforts to subdue 'bandits', and curry favour with the local peoples. An important part of this strategy was the initiation of public health, and medical campaigns. Carried out by mobile teams, and by units of the People's Liberation Army, these campaigns achieved considerable success, if official reports can be believed, in the reduction of infectious diseases, and of malaria.

Despite this emphasis on health care, a comparison of Yunnan with other areas of China shows that, as a whole, it is still worse off (like other peripheral minority areas) than Han areas of China. The region is among those provinces with the highest death rates, the lowest life expectancies, and the second-highest birth rates in China. It topped the country in the incidence of typhoid and paratyphoid fever, and ranked highly in the prevalence of other water-related diseases such as dysentery and viral hepatitis, and malaria.

There has also been an added complication to this picture in recent years, which is associated with the breakdown of the commune system. With the shift towards a system of 'household responsibility', farmers have been engaged in the growing of produce for private sale. As a consequence of the increased wealth, and opportunities for gain, which this has brought to rural areas, the rural health insurance scheme has broken down. While the wealthier farmers and their families can seek medical attention in the larger centres, the preventive aspect of the health system is being neglected. This may have serious implications for the incidence of illness in rural areas.

**Medicine as Symbol**

From the overview given above it is not hard to see that medicine has been used in China to serve purposes which extend beyond the simple healing of physical illnesses. Medicine has been deliberately used among minority groups as a tool to aid in the consolidation of the Chinese state. This touches upon a number of aspects which have parallels in Thailand, and I'd like briefly to spell some of these out here.
As Paul Cohen has pointed out in a recent book, politics and health are closely-knit in Thailand. In particular, I think that the current revival of interest in traditional medicine in Thailand may be largely attributed to its use as a symbol of ethnic identity. This revival has been expressed in the appearance of a large number of publications on the various types of traditional medicine to be found in Thailand, including magazines, books, manuals for self-treatment, and posters. There has also been a good deal of research at university level, as well as seminars, and the establishment of 'herbal medicine gardens' at temples, colleges, and various other public sites. In addition, the use of traditional medicine is being actively promoted by a number of non-Government organisations (NGOs), especially in projects in the Northeast.

An important feature in a number of these activities is the involvement of the monarch, or members of the royal family. As I've discussed elsewhere, the involvement of Thai royalty in the promotion of medicine goes back at least to the second reign. It had strong precedents in Khmer civilisation, with the establishment of a number of "hospitals" in the twelfth century A.D. under Jayavarman VII. The series of medical inscriptions, sculptures, and paintings erected at Wat Pho, and other temples, during the 1830s at the direction of Rama III is one of the better-known examples of the interest shown by Thai royalty in medicine. Such expressions of royal interest in medicine serve a dual purpose: apart from the concern for the well-being of the population which no doubt motivated him, the crown was also seen to be doing good for the people. Medicine has thus long served as a powerful and visible medium for establishing the monarch's position as benefactor.

This usage of medicine has become somewhat more complicated in recent years. The biomedicine widely practised in modern Thailand, though it cannot be considered as 'Western medicine', nevertheless remains strongly associated with Europeans. This may partly explain why, in the nationalistic climate which has developed in the years since the American military withdrawal from Southeast Asia, along with other emblems of 'Thai-ness', there has also been a renewed interest in 'traditional Thai medicine'. Works on traditional medicine have, in fact, been a feature of the publications produced by the Committee for the Promotion of Thai Identity of the Department of Education. In such promotions emphasis is placed on the long history of medicine in Thailand, together with its efficacy, reflecting the ingenuity and self-sufficiency of the Thai populace.

In the use of medicine to represent 'tradition', the former context in which it appeared is often forgotten. This occurs in two main ways: the neglect of regional differences between peoples within Thailand, and the isolation of ingredients from their traditional methods of prescription. These may be clearly seen in the case of the trial project organised by the Ministry of Public Health in conjunction with Mahidol University, and funded by the German aid agency GTZ, which involves the controlled use of 'traditional medicines' under hospital conditions. The drugs used were selected after extensive scientific analysis of a range of substances used in traditional Central Thai medicine. In this case, while the drugs are no doubt pharmacologically effective, their use may differ substantially from the way they were used in traditional
prescriptions. Their traditional effectiveness may well have been based on factors which are highly region or dialect specific, as well as on the context in which they were taken. For traditionally Thai prescriptions contained many ingredients, in some cases over a hundred, and were rarely administered singly, as in the example above. Further, the preparation and consumption of medicine was usually accompanied by invocations and magical practices. Used out of context, it is questionable whether they can still be recognised as 'traditional medicine'.

What appears to be happening in the Ministry of Public Health project, and in a number of other areas of the promotion of traditional medicine, is the definition of 'tradition' and its imposition over the country as a whole. The promotion of a concept of 'traditional Thai medicine' thus contributes, with other institutions such as religion and education, to the production of a unified version of Thai-ness.

Interestingly, this use of medicine to define identity can also be adopted by minority groups within the country to suit their own purposes. As Cohen points out in his recent discussion of the role of non-government organisations in primary health care, the accent in a number of areas is on self-reliance and community participation. This tends to place emphasis on regional differences, rather than the sharing of a common medical tradition. Thus in projects such as that set-up by the Northeast Rural Development Programme (NERDEP) at Phon, near Khon Kaen, there are active attempts to learn the local terminology and treatments for illnesses. In this case, texts obtained from Laos, which bears close linguistic and cultural similarities to Northeast Thailand, were also employed.

Thus, to sum up, in Thailand, as in China, medicine has been used as both a means of legitimising the position of the state, as well as a device for establishing control over regional areas. At the same time medicine can also be used by minority groups as a means to assert their individuality.

Aspects to be followed up in fieldwork

This then is the context in which the proposed examination of health care in Sipsongpanna will be undertaken. Some of the main questions which I will be addressing are, the degree to which the commune health care system was introduced into the region, the extent to which medical care in Sipsongpanna is 'autonomous', the role which traditional health and medical beliefs and practices played and the attitudes of the Tai LŸ towards the state health care system and the ways in which it has been introduced. I will also examine the effect of recent changes in the health system, in the light of the breakdown of the commune system. Following from the last section, I will also be looking at the use of medicine as a symbol, in both the assertion of ethnic identity and in the imposition of state control.

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Biomedicine in Thailand:
Notes for fieldwork.
Prepared for a seminar of the Thai-Yunnan Project
November 1989

Serge Genest

Having studied African therapeutic systems for the past ten years, when I started to read on Thailand I was very impressed by the place which biomedicine seemed to occupy in that country. I should say that the more I gather information on what is going on there, the more this first impression is reinforced.

But, on the other hand, there is anthropological documentation that shows that patients have been able to make practitioners of
biomedicine offer their services in ways that were suitable to them. These conclusions particularly come out of analyses from the Chiangmai area (Weiner, 1982, 1984).

Chiangmai is also the region where, according to another study (Muecke 1976), women have accepted rather easily to go to hospital for child delivery, interpreting biomedical practices in terms of their own traditional beliefs.

Finally, the professional situation of doctors has been investigated in a Northern town and gives some insight into the seemingly unique doctor-patient relationship in this part of the country (Smith 1982).

When one tries to put all those descriptions and analyses together, there seems to be a thesis: the pervasive presence of biomedicine and its wide acceptance by the population. The antithesis says that practitioners have to adapt their practice to patients' demands, i.e. to make biomedicine acceptable, practitioners have to compromise in various circumstances.

In order to look for a synthesis, or maybe to grasp more fully the underlying complexity of surface contradictions, one has to go to the practitioners themselves to get their perceptions of the way the population behaves towards biomedicine and also to know more about their actual practices, through interviews and observations.

As in many researches of this type, history, political economy and ethnography have to be jointly used to give the most accurate account of such a complex environment as this one.

History tells us that right from the beginning of this century, the royal family of Siam was already interested in Western medicine. This has probably much to do with the present situation in Thailand. Building of hospitals, teaching of medicine in universities, though the privilege of the minority, are indices of the interest shown by the political authorities in the protection of health and the curing of sickness.

A recent article on the development of nursing in Thailand (Muecke and Srisuphan 1989) makes this point quite clear for that particular profession. An equivalent survey seems to be still needed for doctors.

Statistical figures, even if very often to be used with much caution, help sometimes to set up reliable questions. The information on numbers of people dying and birth delivery in hospitals and clinics for example could indicate the extent to which people use biomedical facilities. But still then, various observations and ethnographic material would be necessary to document those numbers and make them significant.

Investigating the perception by doctors and nurses of the population's behaviour towards biomedicine as well as at their actual practices when dealing with patients, the anthropologist will also need to go for more detailed ethnography.

It is almost a necessity to refer to trditional medicine when dealing with the attitudes concerning biomedicine. How do doctors and nurses feel about people making use of different kinds of therapies and how do they react? Do they send patients to traditional doctors? Would they themselves members of their family consult such practitioners?

Very often, people come to see doctors with their own
diagnoses on what is happening to them, how do practitioners of biomedicine deal with this? Do they themselves couch their diagnoses in terms understandable by their clients?

Thanks to the theoretical orientations of the last two decades, it is now clear that one has to look both at women's and men's behaviours, particularly in comparative therapeutic systems, to get a fair picture of reality.

Many of the publications dealing with biomedicine in Thailand, and more specifically in the Chiangmai region, confirm the role played by women in this aspect of life and this raises the question as to women being the main agents in the adhesion to this therapeutic system. This question has also to be worked out with doctors and nurses.

The lack of experience on a particular area leaves more questions unanswered than analytical certitudes. Let me hope that this first fieldwork in Thailand would start the unending process of more accurate information leading to more complex questions and a better understanding of the contradictions going on in the society.

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Translations

by Irene Bain

MEDICINE AMONG THE DAI OF XI-SHUANG-BAN-NA

Many Dai villages contain medical practitioners, known as Mo-ya (doctors) in the Dai language. The Mo-ya generally collect medicinal herbs and treat illnesses during breaks from farming. Their procedures for diagnosing illness are similar to those of the Han; observation, listening, questioning and taking the pulse. The Mo-ya first observes the complexion, expressions and movements of the patient to form an initial impression of the severity of the illness. Then the pulse is felt on the left and right wrists, at the heart and at other parts of the body. The Mo-ya then asks the patient about the illness before reaching a conclusion and preparing a prescription. The Mo-ya also perform surgery and can treat difficult diseases with
The Mo-ya gather organic and mineral materials which they process by simple methods to produce medicines which may be taken internally, applied externally or used as a wash. The Mo-ya do not learn by apprenticeship but rather by individual reading, research, experiment and practice. Those skilled at collecting medicines and those adept at treating disease make their knowledge available in book-form.

From Cao Cheng-zhang and Zhang Yuan-qing Dai-zu (The Dai) 1984 Beijing: Min-zu Chu-ban She (Minorities Publishing House) p. 57

LAMAISM AMONG THE NA-XI MINORITY OF LI-JIANG, YUNNAN

Li Jin-chun

The Na-xi of Li-jiang are adherents of the Ning-ma [a Tibetan term] branch of Tibetan Buddhism commonly known as red Lamaism [due to the colour of the Lamas head-dress]. Lamaism spread from Kang-zang [present-day western Si-chuan and eastern Tibet] south across the Jin-sha Jiang [River] and into the Li-jiang region occupied by the Na-xi. According to the section on the "Origin of the Buddha" in The Travels of Xu Xia-ke, Lamaist religious activity began among the Na-xi when the Tibetan Er-bao Buddha passed through Li-jiang en route to Ji-zu Shan in 1550, but lamaseries were only constructed during the Qing Dynasty. The five famous temples near the Li-jiang County seat were built during the reigns of Kang-xi [1662-1723], Yong-zheng [1723-36] and Qian-long [1736-1795] in the Qing Dynasty.

Fu-guo Si [Temple of the Fortunate Nation], located on Mount Zhi west of Bai-sha, was once called Jie-tuo Lin [The Forest Far from the Secular World] but was renamed in the Jia-zhong Period of the Ming Dynasty. Fu-guo was originally a Han Buddhist temple managed by a Yunnanese and its architecture resembled that of temples in the central plains of China; majestic and ordered, with a great hall backed by the Pavillion of the Buddhist Clouds (Tower of the Five Winds). During the Wan-li Era [1573-1620] the Emperor bestowed gifts on the temple which were stored there. To the south was a circular hall with a thatched roof and, to the north, a round pavillion. In front of the pavillion was a tower with intricately carved golden walls. In the Chong-zhen Era [1628-1644] the hereditary chief Mu-zeng rested here, and it was also at this time that Xu Xia-ke [a famous Chinese traveller] spent several days in Nan-wu where he edited and punctuated a poem written by Mu-zeng. In 1679 it became the first lamasery in Li-jiang. In the Tong-zhi Era [1862-1875] it was destroyed by soldiers and rebuilt in the Guang-xu Era [1875-1908].

Yu-feng Si [Temple of the Jade Peak] was built by Lamas in the latter years of the Kang-xi Era [1662-1723]. It became famous as the home of "Wan-duo Shan-cha", the tea of Mount Wan-duo.

Zhi-yun Si [Temple Pointing to the Clouds], located on Mount
Mu-du in La City, was built with donations collected by Lama Li Xiang in the Yong-zheng Era [1723-1736]. Later it was destroyed by soldiers but rebuilt in the fifth year of the Guang-xu Era [1880]. It has a huge hall, 13 courtyards and an orchard.

Wen-feng Si [Temple of the Scholarly Peak]...In the Eleventh Year of the Yong-zheng Era [1734], the Tibetan lama Ge Xuan-bu practised Buddhism here. In the Fourth Year of Qian-long [1740] the Si-bao Buddha came to Li-jiang and noted the favourable geomancy of the site and asked the official responsible for scholarly affairs to collect donations and build a temple. This temple was constructed the following year...It contains 17 courtyards and is most famous of the seven great temples of Li-jiang. The 'spirit cave' behind the temple is the training centre of the 13 large Lama temples of Li-jiang and is known as "The Meditation Hall".

Pu-ji Si is located on Mount Pu-ji to the west of the Li-jiang County Seat. It was constructed in the 36th Year of Qian-long [1772] and repaired in the Jia-qing and Dao-guang Eras [1800's]. It contains a hall roofed in copper tiles. [A number of minor temples are now described].

During the Qing Dynasty [1644-1911], red Lamaism declined in Tibet but prospered in Li-jiang, which became an important religious centre and the southern-most boundary of red Lamaism. The study of Lamaism in Li-jiang is consequently of great value in understanding relations between the Na-xi and Tibetans and the spread and development of Lamaism (particularly the rise and demise of red Lamaism). By traditional accounts, there were five Buddhas, the Great Buddha resided in the Chong-pu temple near Lhasa and the other four in De-ge-ba-pu Si in Xi-kang. The Lama in the Na-xi area, referred to as Ge-ma- Ba (Gao-ma Ba) was the religious leader. For this reason the Lama must travel to Chong-pu or to De-ge Temples and worship in order to gain recognised scholarly status.

The internal organisation of the five great lamaseries of Li-jiang was basically similar but there were different ranks and responsibilities. The Great Lama or Living Buddha known as Lama Gu-ji in Na-xi, was highest in rank. The position of the Great Lama passed on by a process of reincarnation. As the reincarnated Living Buddha was often found in the Li-jiang area, many Great Lama were of Na-xi ethnicity. Some lamaseries were without Living Buddhas for a period because the elders did not indicate who should hold the position or the Living Buddha could not be found. The subordinate to the Living Buddha who held actual power over the religion was the second Lama, commonly called the chief official or Ke-mu. He was versed in the Sutras and Buddhist ceremony and achieved the status of Ke-mu by election. He officiated at ceremonies, tested the acolytes and taught the classics to the Living Buddha...An elected Chang-zong was responsible for managing temple finances...The Dou-ba were those monks who had travelled to Tibet or De-ge to offer obeisance to the Buddha and had studied in the Meditation Hall for three years, three months, three days and three hours in solitary confinement. The Meditation Hall of Wen-feng Si contained over twenty cells which catered for monks throughout the Li-jiang area. Discipline for this period of study was strict: they could only sit cross-legged and must not lie down to sleep, or leave the lamasery or see visitors from outside the temple, but only speak with them across a partition. After
graduating from the Meditation Hall the monks were entitled to the
rank of Dou-ba...Those who had travelled to worship the Buddha more
than once attained the rank of Ge-long and were eligible to meditate
in the Meditation Hall and to be elected to various positions. Those
lama who had not travelled to worship the Buddha were responsible for
maintain the vegetable plots or other such tasks.

The lamasaries enjoyed patronage from the hereditary chiefs
and the administration and were replete with cash and hundreds or
thousands of mu of rented-fields, forest and villages, making them
the largest landlords of the area. These funds were used to support
the lamas, undertake ceremonies, buy agricultural produce and to
speculate.

The great majority of red Lama were Na-xi, but the Na-xi did
not regard this as a position of honour; rather as a consequence of
social environment. Some individuals became Lama to seek redemption
from illness but most were persons who had lost both parents, came
from poor families with many mouths to feed or were escaping military
service. For this reason, the occupation of Lama was rarely hereditary
and donations to Lamas from ordinary families were rare. Generally the
Lama teacher and his disciples formed a family and lived in the
village comprised of Lamas dwelling near the temple. Before 1949 the
difficulty in raising funds for the journey to Tibet delayed the
attainment of scholastic status and the number of monks who desired to
leave the order grew rapidly. There were even cases where an
individual was identified as the Living Buddha but he or his family
opposed the appointment. The common people considered Lamaism to be an
exotic religion which originated outside Li-jiang and was remote from
society.

Buddhism and Taoism among the Li-jiang Na-xi:

The Buddhism of the Han reached Li-jiang before Lamaism,
probably spreading northward from Nan-zhao and Da-li, but stopping on
the southern banks of the Jin-sha Jiang [River]. According to
historical records, there were Han-style temples in Li-jiang such as
Bei-yue Miao [North Yue Temple] during the Tang Dynasty [618-907], but
there are no records of the spread of Buddhism and Taoism into
Li-jiang. Buddhism flourished in Li-jiang during the Ming Dynasty and
over thirty different types of Buddhist temples were constructed in
the area which now forms Li-jiang County. During the Qing Dynasty
[1644-1911] another sixty temples were completed. Before 1949, almost
all the larger villages contained one or more Buddhist temples. These
honoured Sakyamuni, Maitreya, Kuan-yin Pu-sa [The Goddess of Mercy]
and other Han Buddhist deities. Temple architecture also replicated
the Han style. Statues carved from wood or stone or moulded from clay
were of fine quality and some temples also contained murals, among
which those of the Bo-li Dian [Glass Palace] and the Da-jue Gong
[Palace of Great Awareness] are famous. Most monks were Na-xi and the
common people frequently burnt incense and prayed for peace at the
temples, especially during festivals. Their economic power was less
than the Lamas and this was reflected in the scale of their temple
construction and the number of monks in their order. Dispersal of the
temples throughout the Na-xi villages however gave Buddhist monks many
opportunities to recite sutras for the people and facilitated the
transmission of Han culture. Hence Buddhism has influenced the thought
and culture of the Na-xi more profoundly that Lamaism.

Han Taoism probably arrived in Li-jiang with Buddhism or only shortly thereafter. During the Ming Dynasty [1368-1644] the hereditary chief Mu-shi came and paid his respects to the Taoist priests of Li-jiang. Two Taoist temples (Huang-tian Ge and Zhen-wu Ci) were constructed. Before 1949 there was a Na-xi village in the Bai-ma region south of the Li-jiang County seat which proclaimed itself the descendants of Zhang-tian-shi and would frequently invite Taoist priests to conduct funeral rites. In general however, the number of Taoist monks was insufficient to influence Na-xi culture.

In the last hundred years, Catholicism and other sects of Christianity have spread to the Na-xi of Li-jiang. Missionaries have built churches and preached through the villages that God created everything and the Chinese should burn incense and kow-tow before wooden spirits and clay statues. They have distributed all kinds of scriptures, pictures and sweets and sometimes diagnosed and treated illness free of charge. However, they also collected many Na-xi cultural relics and plant samples and drew many topographic maps which angered the Na-xi masses. As a result, there were few converts in Li-jiang in the period just before Liberation [1949].

In conclusion it may be said that the Li-jiang Na-xi region is multi-cultural and its people adherents to a number of different religions. This is apparent from the Qing Dynasty murals of Bai-sha Si [Temple of the White Sands] which contains Buddhist, Taoist and Lamaist murals and occasionally these images are found in the same picture. Although the Na-xi have many religions they did not really believe them. Following various social reforms and propogation of atheist teaching after 1949, these religions have become historical relics and subjects of cultural study.

Source: Na-xi She-hui Li-shi Diao-cha [Investigations of Na-xi Society and History] Vol. 2 pp. 60-2

*ETHNIC RELATIONS OF THE XI-MENG COUNTY YUE-SONG WA MINORITY*

Tian Ji-zhou et al. (1957)

According to old people in Yue-song, when the Wa first arrived in Yue-song the area was already settled by Dai. At that time, there was a Dai village close to the western edge of Yue-song in Ben-gu Ba, a small flood-plain measuring 4-5 miles in length and half a mile wide between the Mu-gu River and a tributary. There were another two villages in the area between Yue-song Xi-gu and Mu-gu, about five km from Yue-song. We went to investigate traces of Dai presence in the area; a temple site and a type of tea-tree grown by the Dai. The tea-tree was used to produce a household tea and, as the Wa had no knowledge of tea-growing, it was probably planted by the Dai. The hill-top where the Dai temple had been located was now cultivated, but traces of the two villages could still be seen.
The Wa of Yue-song say that their relations with the Dai were good, but the two groups did not inter-marry. Soon after the Wa arrived, they told the Dai of paddy-land in Meng-lian and the Dai migrated there. After the Dai left, their lands were gradually taken over by the Wa.

By traditional accounts, the Wa of Yue-song exchanged red deer with the Dai for paddy-fields shortly after arriving in the Dai area. At this time the Wa were accustomed to ride horses and the Dai, red-deer. The Dai later exchanged their red deer for the Wa horses, and this explains why the Wa no longer have horses. The deer which the Wa received in exchange, soon escaped. Originally, the Wa grew paddy and the Dai worked the mountain land. Then the Dai began exchanging their hill tracts with the Wa and eventually they controlled all the paddy land. The Wa use iron, but they probably learnt this from the Dai. It is evident that relations between the Dai and the Wa are long-standing and their effects have been profound.

The La-hu extended their influence to Yue-song during the five generations of Zha-wen, Zha-beng (son of Zha-wen), Zha-sai, Zha-yue and Zhang Guang-ming (son of Zha-yue). When the La-hu arrived, they fought fierce battles with the Wa villages such as Yu-xi, but old people in Yue-song and Mang-xing say their villages did not experience fighting. When Zha-we and Zha-beng came to Yue-song they took some titles of the Wa chiefs and gave some clothes and other items to the serf families of their domain. Zha-sai, Zha-yue and Zhang Guang-ming did likewise. From the time of Zha-wen onward each family of Yue-song annually gave a bowl of rice to Zhang Guang-ming. Even in 1957, Yue-song still sent 12 dou [120 litres] of rice to Zhang Guang-ming at the La-hu New Year.

The La-hu had a great influence on the Wa and many villagers in Mang-xing, Yue-song and Ban-shuai can speak La-hu. The Wa adopted many tools and production techniques from the La-hu, such as the knife, heo and plough. By Wa accounts, their relations with the Han are also long-standing. They say the Han came to Xi-meng and Yue-song about three generations ago.

From "Xi-meng Xian Yue-song Wa-zu She-hui Jing-ji Diao-cha" (Socio-economic Survey of the Yue-song Wa Minority of Xi-meng County) Wa-zu She-hui Li-shi Diao-cha [Investigations of Wa Society and History] Vol. 2 p. 3

*BUILDING THE YUNNAN-BURMA RAILROAD THROUGH WESTERN YUNNAN*

Chang Yin-tang

[The author lists some of the problems encountered during wartime railroad construction in the minority areas of the Yunnan-Burma border region].

a) The problem of in-migration: Western Yunnan is renowned for the production of opium. As the profits from this crop far exceed those from other farm produce, merchants make a huge profit. The Chinese
government has prohibited cultivation of the opium poppy, but this has resulted in residents of central Yunnan migrating to the western border to continue cultivating the lucrative crop. These border areas are controlled by local hereditary chiefs [tu-si]. At first only a few migrant cultivators came and settled and they were welcomed, indeed even encouraged, by the local minority peoples. Local authorities awarded land to those who migrated as families, but later the land was only granted if a whole village resettled in the region. Not long after, the local authorities and the hereditary chieftain from the Burmese border region reacted to the pressures placed on resources by this migrant influx and attempted to restrain migration. It proved difficult to block the borders however, and the numbers of settlers moving to grow opium were bolstered by those fleeing military conscription or corvee labour duty. Consequently, border disputes and bandit activities have increased.

b) The minorities problem: The majority of opium growers are members of the ethnic minorities and those who enthusiastically grow opium in the areas of Ye-ren Shan [Savage Mountains] in Teng-heng County (near the Mekong River at Ban-hong) and Hu-lu-wang are mainly Ka-wa. The topography and minorities of the north Burma and Yunnan sides of the border are indistinguishable. The mountain-top dwellers on Ye-ren Shan and the Ka-chin of north Burma were originally from the same group and have formed a regiment which has received military training from the British army. Although the Chinese government has prohibited opium production, these groups take no notice. If our government were to resort to military force, this might encourage the minorities to unite and instigate a political campaign against China.

c) Incomplete demarcation of the Yunnan-Burma border: The border near Hu-ban and Hu-lu-wang to the east has not been designated, despite several survey investigations by the British and Chinese. Most residents of this area wish to be part of China, but our government, which has sovereign rights yet only nominal power, can only watch the activities of our strong neighbour. Therefore it is extremely important to develop the economy along the Yunnan-Burma railroad to improve security. The British have built roads for the purpose of winning the hearts of residents by guaranteeing their safety, but not requiring them to contribute toward construction costs. The intention of the British is to occupy the area after gaining popular support. Indeed, the British have already established military camps and fortresses at Lu-fang, Ban-jiao and Hu-suan which are more than 50 miles inside the Chinese side of the Burma border. The economic influence of the British extends even further inland. The inability of my country to counteract this activity is very painful. The territory along the Burmese frontier is barren but the failure to demarcate this boundary
adversely affects our national defence and the future of the
Yunnan-Burma railroad. We cannot continue to watch our sovereignty
being nibbled away.

d) Currency problem: Due to the confused political situation in the
border region, it is not possible to create a unified system of
administration. Consequently, a number of different currencies are in
circulation. In the area controlled by the Nationalists [KMT] around
Geng-ma and Xun-ning ban-kai silver coins are still in use, and these
are referred to locally as flower money because of the embossed
flowers on the coins. In the Meng-ding-Hu-ban area, a mixture of
flower-money and rupees are in circulation, and in the area south of
Hu-ban only rupees. This situation places severe restrictions on
intra-area trade. In this respect, the Yunnan-Burma railroad will have
a profound effect on the local economy.

e) Language difficulties: There are a great mixture of languages in
the border area: The majority of residents in Mi-du and Yun-xian are
Tu-jia, Luo-luo and Miao. South of Tou-dao-shui in Geng-ma, Meng-ding
and Hu-ban the majority are Bai-yi, and in the mountains either side
of the Bai-yi live Shan-tou, Li-su, indigenous people, Beng-long and
Ka-wa. At the periodic markets in this area one can hear up to ten
different minorities using different languages. It is not possible to
unify these languages and this impedes trade and causes frequent
disputes.

f) International political problems: In our struggle to maintain
national independence we have confronted many difficulties. In constructing the Yunnan-Burma railroad it was necessary to purchase most of the construction materials overseas and the vast majority required right of passage through French or British territory. These countries considered only self-interest. Originally the French colonial government in Annam showed little sympathy toward repair of roads leading to Yunnan. Only after the Yunnan-Burma railroad commenced did it perceive the threat to China-Annam trade and so offered assistance with transport of materials for the Xu-kun railway, while at the same time creating difficulties over materials destined for the Yunnan-Burma railroad. If the Xu-Kun railway is completed first, this will greatly facilitate trade between China and Annam. This railroad has since been bombed by Japanese aircraft, but at that time France and Japan were not yet at war and so the French took no action; ater they were defeated in the European conflict and unable to resist. Trade between China and Annam has ceased.

g) Smuggling: The Burma-Cambodia-Yunnan border area is rugged and there are many entry-points. Officially, merchants must pass through the roads specified by the Teng-chong customs office but since the border with Burma is not designated there are numerous illicit exchanges and smuggling comprises around five per cent of all trade in the region.

h) Imprecise use of place-names: The use of place-names in the border region has not been standardised and this further complicates international boundary disputes. A case in point is the difficulty in distinguishing the Kong-ming Mountains, the Gong-ming Mountains, the Gao-li-gong Mountains and the Gao-liang-gong Mountains. After investigating these conflicting place-names it was found that most resulted from migration, so that some place-names were given to new locations after migrant groups settled. For example, Meng-lang (Mao-lan) in Yun County and Meng-lang (Ming-lang) in De-dang are separated by over 200 kms. At the western extremity of the Yunnan-Burma Railroad, there are many migrant minority groups, and reduplication of place-names is particulary troublesome. For example, the village of Nan-jian, 22 km east of Meng-ding on the border with Ban-hong, shares its name with a second Nan-jian 40 km south of Mi-du. The distance between these two Nan-jian is over 400 km.

From Dian-xi Jing-ji Di-li (The Economic Geography of Western Yunnan) Kunming: Guo-li Yunnan Da-xue Xi-nan Wen-hua Yan-jiu-shi (South-western Culture Research Group, National Yunnan University) 1943 pp. 142-7.

* SI-GANG-LIH

After 1949, some archaeological discoveries were made in Xi-meng which included many Neolithic stone knives, axes and rubbing stones, indicating that the area had a long history of settlement. A cave was discovered on a mountain near Bu-la-de (also known as Ba-ge-dai or Ba-ga-di) , approximately 50 hua-li [25 km] west of Ma-san which the Wa today still refer to as a sacred site and where religious ceremonies are held. The popular Wa myth "Si-gang-lih" explains that
The Wa lived at this cave site from early times. From the "Si-gang-lih" it is possible to understand the Wa life-style at this time:

The knife handle comes from the bamboo
the A-wa come from "Si-gang".
Our ancestors lived deep in the mountains
and settled at Meng-kan in early times.
The winding waters of the Nan-kang River
carry away the A-wa's sorrows.
Listen to the spring gurgling
drink its clear, sweet mountain waters.
On the heights of Mount Meng-kan
in the depths of its dense forests
we circled round the wild pigs
and speared wild oxen so they fell
We placed mounds of meat on banana leaves
each according with stone weights
Among the heroes of the hunt
Sang Mu-luo is the first,
The arrows from his bow
have pierced both eyes of the turtle-dove
His long knife
has cut the lone boar in two (A ferocious mountain boar which hunts alone)
San-tuo-ni-mo-er-di-ban (The knife handle comes from the bamboo )
Si-gang-li mo-xi--di-mo (People come from the caves).
The river... ah....
Sang-mu-luo....

This folk-song explains that the Wa have a long history as a hunting tribe.

From iXi-meng Wa-zu Zi-zhi-xian Gai-kuang e (Conditions in the Xi-meng Wa Autonomous County) Editorial board, 1986 pp. 10-11.

* 
A DISCUSSION OF SEVERAL ISSUES RELATING TO ANCIENT EARTHENWARE BASED ON A STUDY OF POTTERY PRODUCTION BY THE WA OF YUNNAN

Li Yang-song

This discussion is a first attempt to relate the process of pottery production among the Wa of Yunnan to questions surrounding ancient pottery and, in the wider context, to link ethnography with archaeology.

Pottery clay:
Clay and water are first kneaded to make an unfired object and this is dried in the sun or shade before firing. Most clay is dug locally and has not necessarily undergone processing before use... At present the Wa of Ke-lai [in Xi-meng Autonomous County near the Burmese border] use only clay from the banks of the Nan-ka River. This clay is coarse because it contains sand and small stones in addition
to minerals and is quite sticky...There is also a comparatively high ferric oxide component. The clay is dug out and dried in the sun before being broken up with a wooden mortar and then seived to remove small pebbles. The clay powder is then mixed with the water to make a matrix for moulding...

Pottery manufacture:

Some clues to the ancient method of manufacturing lan-wen [blue-lined] pottery can be discerned from Wa pottery production. At present, Wa blue-lined pottery is marked using a wooden paddle which is incised with parallel furrows. Although these lines are not always neatly ordered, they cannot be regarded as blue-lined designs (Kao-gu Tong-xun Archaeological Bulletin, 1958, Vol. 2 Fig. 2-2). Instead, the lines are stamped onto the outside of the unfired pots. If, however, these Wa pots are placed along-side those of the Yang-shao culture, the patterns appear to be identical. It should be mentioned that the design on the outside of the Wa pots is not merely for decoration or an imitation of the earliest blue-line pottery, but rather an essential part of the pot-making process. Cracks frequently result from hand-moulding of the clay, but imprinting with the linear pattern from the wooden paddle compresses and strengthens the sides of the vessel. Both forms use square, incised paddles or cord-wrapped beaters. Naturally, this requires a certain level of skill to ensure that the shape and decoration are regular. From this we can hypothesise that the earliest potters beat the pots by hand, but since the clay was very sticky, they converted to using wooden paddles and later still wrapped the paddle with cord then drew some fine lines on the surface or used a sharp stone to mark incisions, just as the Wa do today.

As well as hand-moulding pots, we have discovered that the Wa also used a coil construction method, a technique also common to the Neolithic Yang-shao culture. Most pottery produced by the Wa consists of small tea-pots made from a single piece of clay. The clay coil method is only employed for producing larger pieces. The Wa first make a base to which they add row after row of pre-rolled coils. It is important to maintain the moisture and plasticity of the clay and to ensure a good bonding of the layers. Each coil must be allowed to dry before another coil is added...

Many of the earliest pots excavated have rounded or sharply-pointed bases. How can this be explained? Wa pottery production offers some clues. Most Wa pots have rounded bases and this is a consequence of the particular pottery production technique employed. When a pot is being moulded, it is first placed on a concave cushion so that the clay is easy to turn. Moreover, most of the clay is turned into pots and wine cups which are easily propped up by using three stones to form a tripod base. Pottery with sharply-pointed bases is principally used for wine or water jars. To take a drink, a curved bamboo tube is inserted into the wine jar and drained into individual cups by capilliary action.

Bamboo strips are woven around the outside of the jug to strengthen it against breakage and a cushion of woven grass or vines is attached under the pointed base to improve stability. Some string is also tied around the neck of the wine-jug to protect against chipping during use.
The potters of ancient times sprinkled water with their hands onto the interior of the pots to produce a layer of clay called the `pot coat'. The Wa do not use this clay coating method. Instead they apply sticky "si-ran" to prevent leakage.

Firing:
The earliest kiln sites yet discovered date from the Yang-shao and Long-shan cultures and are situated in Ban-po and Feng County. These finds indicate that a high standard of firing had already been achieved. At present, the Ke-lai Wa of Xi-meng lack kilns for firing pots. Instead, they assemble the dried pots on a level site outside the village to avoid the possibility of houses being set alight. The pots for firing are different sizes and the largest are placed at the base of the heap with the smaller pots piled on top. Since the pots are irregularly-shaped, there are gaps between each. Firewood is piled around the pots and ignited. After two or three hours, the fuel is almost completely consumed and the pots are ready (Kao-gu Archaeology, 1958, Vol. 2 Fig. 3-4). The person in charge of the fire then takes a stick and fishes the pots from the embers. Another person immediately marks the mouth or walls of the warm vessel with a brown sticky substance known as "si-ran" to produce a glaze. This helps strengthen the vessel and prevent leakage. The Wa do not possess any other form of glaze (see Kao-gu Tong-xun, Archaeology Bulletin, 1958 Vol. 2 p. 36).

After firing, the pottery is carried home. The embers are extinguished with soil and crops are later grown over the top. As a result, the area can no longer be distinguished as a pottery firing-site. This being the case, how can we find the firing sites of ancient times?

Colour:
The red, brown and grey colours of Yang-shao pottery or the combination of red and grey colouring on a single pot indicate that control of the firing temperature in Yang-shao kilns was well-advanced. The Wa do not use kilns but fire their pots in the open air. Since there is abundant oxygen, the resulting pottery is all ochre-coloured. Firing temperatures are low at around 800 degrees celcius. The colour of the pots is also determined by the moisture content of the wood used for fuel. The flecks on Wa pottery usually result when wood with an uneven moisture content is used for firing. Pots fired using wet wood will become black or light grey, but those fired with dry timber will be ochre-coloured.

(From Kao-gu Archaeology, 1959, Vol. 35 no. 5 pp. 250-4.).

* ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING THE WA SCRIPT

Zhao Fu-rong

The absence of a generally acceptable Wa script has severely hampered Wa political, economic, cultural and educational development. The Wa are distributed across Cang-yuan, Shuang-jiang, Geng-ma, Zhen-kang and Yong-de in the Mekong [Lan-cang] region, in Lan-cang, Xi-meng, Meng-lian and Jing-dong in the Si-mao region and in Sheng-chong and Chang-ning Counties in the Bao-shan region. There are also some Wa in Meng-hai County. The major settlements are located in
The A-Wa mountains which span the Xi-meng Wa Autonomous Region, the Cang-yuan Autonomous Region and Shuang-jiang, Geng-ma, Lan-cang and Meng-lian.

The Wa language is classified in the Wa-De-ang branch of the Mon-Khmer group of the Austro-Asiatic family of languages. [In China this group also includes the Beng-long and Bu-lang languages, used by approximately 370,000 people who are distributed along the southern borders of Yunnan Province. Research into these languages is comparatively advanced (Zhong-guo Da Bai-ke-quan-shu. The Chinese Encyclopaedia: Ethnic Group 1986:555)].

The Wa language is split into three comparatively large dialect groups: Lan-cang, Geng-ma and Shuang-jiang. The Lan-cang dialect is known as "Bu-rao", that in parts of Xi-meng, Meng-lian and Lan-cang as "A-Wa" and the dialect spoken in Ban-nuo and Zhen-kang as Wa.

For a long period in their history, the Wa lacked a written script and schooling system. Teaching was via oral transmission and records were carved in wood and numerals retained on knotted string.

In the 1930's and early 1940's, M. Vincent Young, an Englishman with American citizenship and his son came to proselytise in the A-Wa mountains and devised a La-hu script using the latin alphabet. In 1938, this script was used abroad to print bibles, hymn-books and other materials, but the print-run was extremely small and these books were only distributed in China among converts in a few tribes in the "Bu-rao" dialect region. The script was not popular among the Wa because the number of translated words was limited and unable to give full expression to the language. After 1949, linguists were sent among the Wa people to work with them in devising a suitable Wa script based on the latin alphabet, and the result has proved popular.

Between 1957 and 1962 this script was crucial in eradicating illiteracy and promoting universal education. The Yunnan Minorities Press began printing text-books, picture-books and primary school readers using the new Wa script as a first step in training local accounting and teaching staff. During the ten years of social disorder [1966-76] the script fell into disuse. After 1976, the Language Department of the Institute of the Minorities in Yunnan recommenced specialised Wa classes and a number of local government institutions reorganised ethnic language promotion units. For example, in Lan-cang County in the "Bu-rao" dialect region Wa has been taught in winter slack-season classes, at night-school, and in basic literacy classes as part of a literacy campaign. Specialist Wa teachers have been trained and materials translated into the Wa script and there are now 50 to 60 teachers proficient in the Wa script in this County. Wa is taught in all primary schools located in predominantly Wa settlements and these classes have been welcomed by the Wa...

The literacy rate has improved greatly where the Wa script has been used in literacy campaigns. In Dong-mi Village of Lan-cang County where La-hu is spoken there are 649 persons or 128 households residing in 6 natural villages. These settlements are extremely poor with an average of only 200-300 kg of rice per person and many households going without grain at the New Year. The houses are made of grass and there is not a tiled-roof house to be seen. Not one family possesses a quilt and most have only cotton blankets. Bowls are made from wood or bamboo
and the people do not use chop-sticks. Girls already in their teens have trousers but no tops and some men go to work wrapped in a cotton blanket because they have no clothes. Agricultural tools comprise only a hoe and sickle, and in the case of some households only a hoe. There are no lamps at night, but only the light of the fire. No-one in these settlements can speak Mandarin Chinese or read Chinese characters. [The author then attributes economic improvements to the promotion of the Wa script]...In 1981, average grain consumption per person increased to 832 kg, compared with the national average of 1,000 kg. The village specialised in the production of tea and now everyone has a tile-roofed house and a radio and some even own television sets and sewing machines. There are new clothes and bedding for all. Village accountants and tractor-operators have watches and all families have savings accounts...

Neglect of the Wa script during the last thirty years has placed a serious brake on Wa economic development. The "Bu-rao" dialect region has shown improvement due to the influence of Mandarin Chinese and because local cadres have emphasised the importance of promoting minority languages....

Despite thirty years of economic improvement in minority settlements however, the discrepancy between the more developed parts of the region and the interior is considerable, and particularly evident in the "A-Wa" dialect region. Here industry and productive forces are underdeveloped, abundant resources, such as minerals, remain unutilised, the labour force is poor and uneducated, agricultural production is simple and some villages still practise slash-and-burn agriculture. There is no economic surplus or commodity exchange and marketing is considered a second-rate form of employment. It is difficult to commoditise such a society. The level of illiteracy is also a blockage to development. Table 1 indicates the level of educational attainment in the three Wa dialect regions in 1985 and compares these with figures for Yunnan Province and all China. These deplorable findings reflect neglect of the Wa script and its promotion. In recent years, agricultural production in the area has improved but the local population has also increased as has the numbers of illiterate. In 1964, the Wa numbered 200,277 persons and this increased to 298,591 by 1982, a 49 per cent increase over 18 years. By 1987, there were over 300,000 Wa. To address this problem of population increase and land scarcity, it will be necessary to promote family planning and universal education using the Wa script so that agricultural production techniques can be improved and a commodity economy developed.

In recent years many scholars have offered suggestions for the promotion of the Wa script and economy but these have received insufficient attention. Some schools in local areas where Mandarin Chinese is not even spoken have abandoned promotion of the Wa script in favour of Chinese characters and results have been poor. Those who teach in this manner are not acting in accordance with the actual situation in these areas or with the desires of the population.

In literacy campaigns, most classes have been offered using Chinese characters but the rate of success in eliminating illiteracy has not approached that attained through the use of the Wa script. In 1981-2 the percentage gaining literacy through participation in classes was six per cent for those taught with Chinese characters but
27 per cent for those using the Wa script. In 1983 the results were one per cent for those using Chinese characters and 26 per cent for Wa script and in 1984-5, 2 per cent for Chinese characters and 28 per cent for Wa script. The melding between use of Chinese characters and the Wa script will be a matter of several centuries and cannot be achieved over the short term as is proposed by those who advocate teaching only the Chinese writing system. We cannot wait until the Wa can read Chinese characters before promoting advanced scientific knowledge and techniques...

Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>semi-illiterate</td>
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<tr>
<td>All China</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yunnan Prov.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lan-cang county</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xi-mang county</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Da-mang-nuo vill.</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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More on the Princess Dara Rasmi

In 'The Prince and the Moulmein Market Girl' (Number Five, June 1989: 26-8) I included some comments on the Princess Dara Rasmi. A recent issue of the Thai journal Silpawatthanatham (Number 13, October 2532) has an article which takes a rather different view of the princess and the court of King Chulalongkorn. Below are some translated extracts from the article and brief comments.

Phrarachachaiya Caw Dara Rasmi kap phra rachachobai "khrongrak" phya "khrong-myang" by Sansani Wirasilpchai pp.52-59. [The title may be translated 'The Royal Consort Caw Dara Rasmi and the Royal Strategy of the "control of love" for the "control of the state"]

The princess was fourteen when she was sent to the Royal
Palace in Bangkok and her father the Prince of Chiangmai gave her into the custody of Prince Damrong.

On that occasion Caw Inthawichayanon was very concerned that as his royal daughter was so young she would not know how to behave in the proper way. Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphab relates how Phracaw Inthawichayanon gave his royal daughter into his care with the words [in a representation of kham mÑang] 'Royal Lord I put Nang Yng [the name by which she was known to family and friends] in your care. If she does anything improper or incorrect (thaa tham anjang ba thuuk ba tong sadet caw ko cong riak tua maa keek hua aw toe)[note that the Thai 'keek' is used and not the kham mÑang 'wat'] Royal Lord, please summon her and give her a knock on the head.'

On the death of his daughter the king is reported to have said, I am to blame. My daughter should have been made a princess, but I forget to confer [the title] (luuk khaw khuan pen caw faa) and she died.

The article also says, The palace of the royal consort was different from other palaces, that is, it was like a little kingdom of Chiangmai, from their dress, the princess and her courtiers were wont to wear sin, they spoke kham mÑang and ate northern type food. Though their customs were different from that of other palaces, there was no one who disdained them, because the royal consort always conducted herself with great propriety.

This view is at odds with other sources.

Gehan Wijeyewardene

* * *

News and Correspondence

Professor Jane Hanks writes expressing the shock so many of us feel at the death of Jennifer Cushman.

Her enthusiastic support of A.A.S's Khosana publication on Southeast Asian matters gave us great encouragement at a time when there were difficulties. In her memory, I would like to make the enclosed contribution to the expenses of the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter. On behalf of the project, the editor conveys his gratitude to Professor Hanks.

* Professor Clarence Aasen, Dean of Architecture at the University of Wellington writes that he is commencing a long term research project on Chinese influences on architecture and urban form in Thailand.

He would be interested in hearing from anyone undertaking similar research.

[Professor Aasen's letter prompts me to reproduce a few paragraphs from a recent article in The New York Review of Books. Editor.]

Architecture in contemporary Bangkok

For anyone concerned with contemporary architecture a tour of
Japan is, of course, essential. But a visit to Bangkok can also be instructive. ... the road from the airport soon passes a Toshiba factory's façade with columns of concrete simulating red brick. There are large, colorful signboards advertising new middle-class suburban housing estates, some uncannily reminiscent of Quinlan Terry. Then the high-rise buildings of the city come into view, mainly faceless glass and concrete slabs. One as it ascends, breaks out into all the colours of the rainbow from red to blue. Another is crowned by a Palladian style church-cum villa with, for good measure, an attached open pavilion that combines the Athenian Tower of the Winds and the Choragic Monument of Lysikrates.

The twenty-one story headquarters of the Bank of Asia - by the well-known Thai architect Sumet Jumsai who denies that he is a Post-Modern - has been given the appearance of a robot with menacing eyes and, up its flanks, gigantic hexagonal nuts framing windows. And a tour of the city-center reveals a fantastic range of Western styles - a bank, for instance, amid the clamoring gongs and bells and noodle stalls of downtown Surawongse, disports huge Corinthian half-columns framing a Gothic rose window. To penetrate the new and heavily guarded residential areas of this extraordinary metropolis is difficult; but advertisements offer houses described as "Roman Imperial, white House, Tudor Traditional and Post-Modern Paradise."

What makes recent architecture in Bangkok so stimulating is, however, its rationale. Since Thailand was never colonized, classical architecture arouses no unhappy memories of a subjugated past. Nor does it to a Thai (i.e., a Buddhist), have the slightest glimmering of the meaning that it has for Westerners educated in the traditions of Christianity and classicism.

The classical approach was first introduced in the late nineteenth century by King Rama V Chulalongkorn (travestied in The King and I). Until then all secular and most religious buildings had been built in wood in traditional styles. The form of the beautiful Thai temple with its high-pitched roof, evolved at least as early as the fifteenth century, has been followed to the present day without a break. (Only the building materials have changed with the use of reinforced concrete for the piers.) But as domestic buildings of wood were either burned down or rotted away they were replaced by street upon street of drab utilitarian structures. New large-scale commercial buildings began to spring up in the 1950s and from the early 1980s their faceless anonymity had begun to be replaced by something that, to Thai eyes, is exotically Western.

Classical temples have no deeper meaning or emotional resonance for them than do pagodas for us, so they can use them heedlessly, quite simply for their decorative effect and for their exotic air of Western wealth and consumer abundance. In other words, their Post-Modern buildings are reverse images of ours. So far from being expressions of Western cultural dominance, they illustrate how in architecture, as in other ways, the East now exploits the West for its own ends, taking and adopting what it can use, and discarding what seems immaterial. And there is money in Post-Modern classicism in Bangkok. The Palladian fantasy topping the apartment block by Ong Ard is said to be rented for $10,000 per month.

Honour, Hugh: 'The battle over post-modern buildings' NYRB XXXV (14)

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Professor H. Leedom Lefferts writes of his research,
I have the distinct impression that inadequate attention has been paid
to the role of ... textile exchange and trade in the past and the
links to the present an examination of this trade might provide. (One
hypothesis could be that textiles formed a major means by which social
systems were organized by 'higher-ups', both in terms of textiles
distributed by these phu yay, and textiles sent in to fulfill tribute
requests. That movement of textiles and power provides a way to
understand the current expansion of village textiles in the Thai
state. I wrote a paper that touched on this subject, 'The kings as
Gods: Textiles in the Thai State' [Textiles as Primary Sources:
Proceedings of the First Symposium of the Textile Society of America
Minneapolis Art Institute, 16-18 September 1988, co-ordinated by John
E. Vollmer, 1989: 78-85]) ... I have been doing some research on the
role of textiles in tribute, the different kinds of cloth involved,
and where it appears these textiles went. I'd be interested in knowing
if someone has done any research on this or allied subjects.

He also brings our attention to two recent publications.
... a new Isan-Thai-English Dictionary compiled by Dr. Preecha
Phinthong 1989. Printed at Darnsutha Press, distributed by Kled Thai,
1074 pp., price: Bt. 375

Dr. Preecha, for most terms, has included a famous quotation
or use of the word in question. [It also includes] special sections on
differences in the pronunciation ... in different parts of the region.
E-sarn Mural Paintings published by The Committee to Survey and
Photograph E-Sarn Murals 1989, financed by the Toyota Foundation. Text
and captions in English and Thai, 308 pp., 110 b & w illustrations and
90 pp. colour plates. Orders from non-Thai addresses in US$ only check
payable to Ajan Pairoj Samosorn, Department of Humanities, Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Khaen University, Khon Khaen
40002, Thailand. $40 sea mail, $55 air.

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Geoff Wade writes from Hong Kong,
I have recently read your (Gehan Wijeyewardene's) discussion of 'lak
myang' in your Place and Emotion and, in turn, have also had a look at
Terwiel's article on the 'City Pillar'. I was immediately reminded of
two bronze cowrie containers excavated at Mt. Shi-zai at Jin-ning,
Yun-nan, both of which depict scenes involving a pillar and
sacrifices. The cowrie containers date from the last two centuries
B.C., so obviously they pre-date Hindu influence.
I enclose photocopies of the two scenes. You will note that the pillar
seems to be a central aspect of the ceremony(ies?) depicted and
presumably is related to the persons bound (for sacrifice?) nearby.
The serpent coiled round the pillar might suggest that it is of
totemic significance. Could the people surrounding the pillar be
making offerings to it (as symbol of the local political authority?).
Bronze drums, throughout history, seem to have been an indicator of a
local centre of political power.
Could these pillars have been the precursors of 'lak myang'?

Gehan Wijeyewardene, thanks Geoff Wade, and writes,
In the book referred to I discussed, with some sympathy, the view put forward by Paul Mus that a neolithic cult of a tree or stone representing the power of the soil is pervasive throughout 'Monsoon Asia'. If this were the case we might hypothesize a common ancestry for all the 'tree', 'stone', 'pillar' cults of the region. One might go even further and say that universally there are tendencies to make these, or similar, associations. There may, of course, be much more specific historical connections between the bronze drums referred to and the Thai (Tai) 'lak myang', though these seem to me to be almost impossible to establish.

He has also drawn our attention to a number of recent publications which may be of interest to readers:

1) Zhang Xiong, 1989: Zhong-guo Zhong-nan Min-zu Shi (History of the minorities in central and southern China). Published by Guang-xi Ren-min Chu-ban She (Guang-xi Peoples' Publishing House), Nan-ning, 335 pages. This book contains chapters on "Minorities of central and south China during the Wei-Jin and Nan-bei [535-581 AD] Dynasties" (pp. 70-143), in the Tang and Song Dynasties (pp. 144-239) and Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties (pp.242-330).

2) A four-page mimeographed bibliography of works concerning the Chu-xiong Yi Minority of Yunnan compiled by Mr Liu Yao-han, a Research Fellow of the Institute of Nationality Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Yunnan. Mr Liu is also director of the Institute of Yi culture, Yunnan. Copies may be obtained by writing to the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter.

3) Fan Hong-gui and Gu You-zhi, 1989: Zhuang-zu Lun-gao (A collection of papers on the Zhuang minority), Guang-xi Ren-min Chu-ban She (Guang-xi Peoples' Publishing House), Nan-ning, 313 pages. This book contains articles on Zhuang historical research, ethnic relations between the Zhuang and Han, the Zhuang sense of a Zhuang identity, Zhuang-Thai relations, Zhuang-Vietnam relations, the system of land ownership, brass drums, Zhuang funeral customs and Zhuang frog worship. In terms of geographical coverage, articles are drawn from work in Guang-xi, Thailand and Vietnam.

* Charles F. Keyes, writes enclosing a copy of a report to Laos made by him and Karl Hutterer. There is much of interest in the report, but we cite here only a couple of brief paragraphs from the section on Xieng Khouang. Sections on the National Library, the palmleaf manuscript project and scholarly publication in Laos will be published in The Bulletin of the Committee on research Materials on Southeast Asia. Even twenty years later, the dominant impression one has of the lowland areas of Xieng Khouang province is of a country ravished by war. As we flew in and out of the capital by Air Lao helicopters and as we drove around the province, we were struck by a landscape pockmarked everywhere by bomb craters. Many of the houses and buildings we saw seemed like temporary structures, often made in part with pieces of metal which had been left behind after the war. We saw, for example, houses built on piles made of bomb casings. The major source of cash income for the province comes from the sale of scrap metal ...

We travelled to a Hmong village, Ban Nong Tua, located near old Xieng
Khouang. We were impressed by relative prosperity of this village, evident in the quality of the houses and especially in the silver jewelry of the women. The village seemed as well off as any Charles Keyes has visited in northern Thailand. Villagers told us that they follow the old religion and maintain traditional customs. They put on a performance for us which included Hmong girls singing, a man performing on the polyphonic reed instrument known as the khaen in Lao, and Hmong girls and boys playing a version of the ball game. He will commence research on the theme 'The "Who are the Thai?" debate: construction and deconstruction of national and ethnic identities.'

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Book notice
The Thai-Yunnan Project announces the publication of Ethnic Groups across National Boundaries in Mainland Southeast Asia (tentative title) by the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore in early 1990.

Contents

Introduction: Definition, Innovation and History. Gehan Wijeyewardene

Language and Ethnicity: the Mon in Burma and Thailand. Christian Bauer

Thailand and the Tai: Versions of Ethnic Identity Gehan Wijeyewardene

A Comparative Study of Structure and Contradiction of the Austroasiatic System in the Thai-Yunnan Periphery. Cholthira Satyawadhna

Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Nation-State: the Karen in Burma and Thailand. Ananda Rajah

Capitalism and the Structure of Yao Descent Units in China and Thailand: a Comparison of Youling (1938) and Pulangka (1968). Douglas Miles

Squatters or Refugees: Development and the Hmong. Nicholas Tapp

Afterword: 'Ethnicity" and Anthropology. Rozanna Lilley


2King Mangrai (1262-1311), the founder of the Mangrai Dynasty (1296-1558), founded Chiangmai and made it the centre of the dominions of Lannathai in 1296. His heirs and successors ruled as kings of Lannathai for about 262 years, when the kingdom lost its independence to Burma in 1558. The country was governed by Burmese for about 170 years. Independence was regained in 1727, but the Burmese again conquered parts of Lannathai in 1761. The people of Lannathai, in alliance with the Thai army, drove the Burmese out of Chiangmai in 1774. Lannathai was a Thai dependency between 1774 and 1884, when it was incorporated into the Thai kingdom.

3For an account of developments in the infrastructure see Sunthari 1979; for communications Kyakol 1976.

4Britain was the first country to sign a trade treaty with Thailand, in 1855. The treaty allowed trade through the Royal Treasury.

5For this paper, specific data is used from interviews with the
following persons (name, age, district and province are given): Kaew Caikwang, 90, Mae Rim, Chiangmai; Duan Ninkaew, 76, Doi Saket, Chiangmai; Kaew Khitchob, 89, Mae Chan, Chiangrai; Chamnuan Sirinam, 83, Doi Daket, Chiangmai; Samran Carunkitpracharom, 65, Amphur Muang, Nan; Suriya Khampai, 86, Amphur Muang, Maehongson; Thap Nanthawong, 80, Amphur Muang, Nan; Duang Kaewani, 66, Mae Taeng, Chiangmai; Ma Mangloi, 53, Mae Taeng, Chiangmai; Mi Panyakham, 65, Wiang Papao, Chiangrai; Khankaew Phromkorn, 82, Doi Saket, Chiangmai; Khampan Suwantha, 75, Amphur Muang, Nan; Bunsom Thatchai, 43, Amphur Muang Maehongson. Ages are at date of interview - 1981.

This is inferred from most of the interviews, from all provinces.

National Documents Division. Publications of the Fifth Reign. Ministry of Communications 26/13 krom myyn mahis¹¹n ratchaharythai kraab bankhom thuun phra baat somdet phra c'm klaw caw juu hua 24 November 121 Ratanakosin Era (1903) (Krommamuen Mahisorn Rachaharythai to his Majesty King Chulalongkorn).

National Documents Division, Ministry of Fine Arts, Publications of the Sixth Reign. Ministry of Communications 5.3/2 Mr L. Wyler caw krom rot fai kraab thuun phra caw boromawong th¹¹ krom lua» nareet worarit 1111 p.. 20 November 2455 (1912). (Mr L. Wyler, Head of the Railway Department to Prince Krom Luang Naret Worarit.) Publications of the Sixth Reign, Ministry of Communications 5.3/8 banthyk rya» kaan t¹¹ thaa. rot fai caak nakh¹¹n lampa» pai nakh¹¹n chian¹mai (Papers relating to the extension of the railway from Lampang to Chiangmai) 6 August 2461 (1918).


Sidel (1982) mentions that in 1980 there existed "25 colleges for training doctors of traditional Chinese medicine as well as Uygur, Mongolian, and Tibetan medicine" (p.68). See also Jamison et al (1984) who argue that "official policy does not discriminate in favour of any particular system of traditional medicine (p.46). "The distinctive body of medical theory and practice developed over the centuries on the Tibetan plateau is today a precious medical heritage of the Tibetan people and an important part of Chinese traditional medicine as a whole " (Cai Jingfeng, "Tibetan Traditional Medicine", China Reconstructs, March 1982).

Following Liberation in 1949, one of the early priorities of the Chinese government was the development of a health system to serve the rural population. The result was a health care system based on four main principles: a commitment to health for all people; prevention of disease; the use of traditional medicine in conjunction with modern medicine; and the use of mass movements for carrying out health work (Wilenski (1976), p.7.).


According to Zheng (1981), "27.5% of the 800 fully qualified medical personnel [in Xishuangbanna] come from minority nationals, while the percentage for 2,700 paramedics (barefoot doctors) and midwives is 80" (p.29).

Barefoot doctors are said to have employed ("in the interest of thrift and cure") herbal medicines, "having learned to prescribe from traditional doctors and peasant practitioners". They were also engaged in the collection and testing of folk remedies (ibid.)
Moseley (1973), pp.35-36.
Bamber (1989).
Coeds (1941).
Bamber (1989).
See Mulholland (1979), p.106.

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