The Cambodian Situation

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The shift in Washington's Cambodia policy announced by the US Secretary of State James Baker in July has had far-reaching diplomatic and strategic consequences for Cambodia and the neighbouring region. Baker said that the US would give humanitarian aid to Phnom Penh and vote to declare vacant the Cambodia seat at the UN.

The war in Cambodia was already approaching a denouement, of sorts. The Vietnamese have withdrawn most of their forces. The Hun Sen administration in Phnom Penh is still the only effective and recognisable authority in Cambodia. The resistance forces led by the Khmer Rouge, have stepped up their attack on the government but are not in a position to bring it down.

Agreement meanwhile has been reached between the Hun Sen government and the three rebel factions to form a Supreme National Council as part of a UN peace settlement package for Cambodia. It is a significant step forward although a number of difficult problems remain to be negotiated. Most important will be the extent to which the Hun Sen government hand over power to the UN and the success or otherwise of a ceasefire and the disarming of the rival armies.

But it is not good to be too optimistic about the Jakarta agreement. At least not yet. One cannot deny, however, that everybody seems to be getting a benefit out of it.

The ASEAN states, led by Singapore, are pleased that Vietnam is not to enjoy the fruits of its aggression in Cambodia. They are relieved too that they are not being left behind following
Washington's shift away from allocating Cambodia's un seat to the Khmer Rouge-led coalition.

China has been given a parachute. It could not unilaterally abandon the Khmer Rouge or permit their exclusion from a final settlement without losing face. The un veil has given China a gracious retreat from continuation of a policy in which it had little further to gain and a lot to lose.

The ussr and other members of the un Security Council can feel satisfied that after Iraq, Cambodia might be seen as another milestone in the rejuvenation of the un Security Council.

The us can claim that it was the Baker statement last July that forced all the other pieces on the chessboard to move.

Australia can be satisfied with its role and prospective sales of the 'Red Book' guide to a comprehensive solution in Cambodia. Australia's military forces can look forward to an activity for which they have been training themselves for some time.

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Not surprisingly, the Jakarta agreement has been welcomed by Hanoi. It signals light at the end of a long tunnel. The irony is that Vietnamese Foreign Minister Thach has managed to get the West to take over the financial, diplomatic and military cost of a problem that has so heavily burdened Vietnam and for which it has been criticised for so long. Vietnam has also secured its southern borders, and it can expect normalised relations with the us and other Western countries.

Hanoi's interests, however, are starting to diverge from Phnom Penh's. It wants Western economic aid and a resumption of imf loans. In exchange for concessions from the Khmer Rouge and Sihanouk on the composition of the Supreme National Council, Hanoi has apparently compromised on the wording that is to appear in the eventual final agreement on Cambodia. Rather than a phrase referring to Khmer Rouge genocide, the final text is likely to include a reference to a non-return to the 'events' (read killings) of the recent past.

For Cambodians - after a ceasefire - the Jakarta agreement promises two or three years of respite from war and infusions of money, aid, and medicine. The agreement is, however, not likely to be a good one for the people of Cambodia over the next few months. The
Khmer Rouge will step up their military activities in order to seize as much territory as possible before a ceasefire expected by the time of the Paris conference in November.

Nonetheless, the Jakarta agreement is a win for the Phnom Penh government. Hun Sen insisted that the composition of the Supreme National Council should be on the basis of Phnom Penh holding six of the 12 seats and the three opposing factions having two each. The Khmer Rouge, Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann had wanted a four way division giving them nine to Hun Sen's three.

The result in Jakarta reflects more closely the situation on the ground inside Cambodia: there are not four equal factions fighting for control of the country. There is instead a reasonably effective government in control of the bulk of Cambodia's territory and population. Opposed to it are three factions of unequal strength. They have little in common and will fight amongst themselves at the first opportunity.

Nor should it be forgotten that behind the urbane Khieu Samphan, one of the four principals to the agreement signed in Jakarta, there still stands Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, Ieng Thirith, Son Sen, Nuon Chea, Ke Pok and Ta Mok. Their record of violation of basic human rights in Cambodia is almost unparalleled. It was universal distaste for their brutality and fear that they could return after the Vietnamese withdrawal in September 1989 that prompted Western countries to pitch in to find a solution.

There is no evidence that the Khmer Rouge have changed their agenda or their ideology. They are prime candidates to appear before a war crimes tribunal on charges of crimes against humanity. Yet the discussions in New York, Jakarta and Paris have papered over this dark issue.

Pol Pot and Ieng Sary were sentenced to death in absentia by the Phnom Penh government in July 1979, so it is hard to envisage them being welcomed with open arms in the capital. Yet the Jakarta agreement has ensured that their representatives are included on the Supreme National Council. And there is no certainty that the Jakarta agreement will be capped by an agreement on the vexed question of exactly how much executive power will be held by the transitional authority appointed by the un to run Cambodia's affairs. Heng Samrin has said Phnom Penh intends to maintain the status quo in Cambodia, both politically and militarily. This is strongly opposed by the Khmer Rouge and Prince Sihanouk who fear they will be disadvantaged in the subsequent elections.

For all practical purposes, however, there is little choice for the un other than to rely on the existing government infrastructure. Previous un supervisory roles aimed at facilitating political solutions have been quite nominal, leaving the incumbent civil authority to run the country with a minimum of un involvement, even in circumstances where the political solution had been accepted by all parties (as in West Irian in 1962-63 and, more recently, in Namibia).

There should be no problem for un forces to verify the Vietnamese withdrawal and ensure a cessation of outside arms supplies. The most complicated difficulty will be the disarming of the armed forces of all sides in Cambodia. There must be strong reservations about any of the four elements in the Cambodian equation agreeing to
surrender all their weapons, particularly the Khmer Rouge. They must realise that they are likely to lose any supervised election.

The next twelve to eighteen months of preparations for elections will tend to favour Sihanouk and the non-communists but Hun Sen must be given a very good chance of winning.

After elections and the withdrawal of a UN presence, it is hoped that Cambodia can get on with the task of economic reconstruction and development. One must, however, remain very sceptical about what role the Khmer Rouge will or will not play. The pessimistic view is that they will be preparing for a day of reckoning in post-UN Cambodia. If they do resort to arms and terror, the government in Phnom Penh, formally recognised as such by the international community, could ask for outside assistance on the basis of collective self-defence.

It could invite Vietnam to intervene. Or China, or Australia.

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Address by His Excellency The Ambassador for the Royal Thai Government to Australia, Dr. Chawan Chawanid
(on the occasion of the launching of a program of Thai studies, 23 August 1990.)

At the outset, I wish to join the Hon. Minister for Education, Employment and Training in congratulating the Asian Studies Council and the National Thai Studies Association of Australia for their success in formulating a comprehensive strategy and program for the teaching of the Thai language in Australia, as the Hon. Minister has just outlined.

It is indeed a great privilege for me to be here today at the launch of initiatives in Thai studies in Australia, an event which will be long remembered as one of the most significant milestones in the history of relations between the peoples of Australia and Thailand.

As Ambassador of Thailand to the Commonwealth of Australia, I have no greater desire than to see our two countries and peoples ever-closer linked together by strong bond of lasting friendship based on understanding and mutual interest. Such understanding can be possible only through knowledge of each other's way of life, deeper awareness of each other's heritage of the past as well as prospect for the future, and on growing realization that the two nations also have a common destiny to share in the Asia-Pacific Region. A good linguistic background is essential to develop such understanding, breaking down unnecessary language barriers and bridging such cultural gaps as may exist.

However, I have found that people are generally not keen to learn foreign languages, especially those languages which are believed to be 'difficult' ones, such as Thai. It is because of this psychological aversion, I believe, that Thai studies in Australia have progressed very slowly since the modest beginning in the early 1970's, when the Government of Thailand agreed to send a small number of Thai lecturers to teach Thai language courses at the Australian National University under the Colombo Plan 'in reverse'. I am therefore so
gratified to see the progress achieved today by the National Thai Studies Association of Australia under the sponsorship of the Asian Studies Council, with the active support of the Australian Government.

The National Thai Studies Association of Australia is to be highly commended for the fact that, soon after its establishment in July 1989, it succeeded in developing by March 1990 the National Strategy for Thai Language Studies, the implementation of which would certainly lay a broader and stronger foundation for future educational and research cooperation between Thailand and Australia. I welcome such developments in Australia and would like to reassure our cooperation and support for the endeavours.

In this connection, I wish to add my observation that, while I agree with the rationale for Australians to study Thai as given on pp.11-12, there is also another dimension of Thai studies, and that dimension is the step beyond literacy so that one can come to understand the true thinking and feeling of the Thais in their cultural milieu. I once heard a comment that in negotiating with a Japanese businessman, do not take his 'yes' to mean 'I agree', for it may mean only 'I hear you!' In a similar situation, a 'krup' from a Thai in a normal conversation would mean 'message received, go on' or something of that sort.

However, it has been pointed out to me that, while there seems to be a general weakness in the knowledge of Thailand and the Thai people as compared to Australians' familiarity with Indonesia on the one hand and of Northeast Asia on the other, there have been Australians who recognized the gap of knowledge about other East Asians who populate the vast area between the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator, notably the Thai-speaking peoples in all countries of Southeast Asian Mainland. The attempt to complete Australia's knowledge of the Pacific Rim in this direction has already begun and part of it is exemplified by the ANU Thai-Yunnan Project, which has greatly impressed me personally.

In this case, I venture to envisage further cooperation beyond the field of Thai literacy, and there are many universities in Thailand which would welcome such cooperation in their respective fields of academic research, such as the University of Chiangmai in the North, University of Khonkaen in the Northeast and University of Songkhla in the South. I only mention this in passing, in the hope that it may stimulate further projects for Thailand-Australia cooperation in the future.

Let me conclude by saying that, in so far as Thailand is concerned, Australia and the Australians are well known to the Thai people. You may find quite a few senior Thai public servants or business executives to be Geelong Grammar old boys or graduates from Australian universities. This kind of traditional contact should continue among younger generations. On the other hand, I am convinced that the initiatives in Thai studies in Australia launched today by The Hon. Minister John Dawkins will succeed in expanding and strengthening Australia's understanding of the Thai language and the Thai people, and expanding Australia's horizon of contact with the countries and peoples of the Pacific Rim. And, to borrow a saying by
someone we know, 'I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship!'
Thank you.

* * *

Anthropological analysis of modern medical practice in Thailand

Serge Genest

Flexibility has been and is still advocated by many social scientists to explain particular features of everyday life in Thailand. This would also be the case with different behaviours towards sickness. This may be demonstrated through the relevant literature on two different grounds. First, some doctors are prepared to give treatment to patients according to their beliefs and their ways of life. Second, the tremendous decrease in the birth rate in the country could be interpreted as an indication of a favourable response (compliance) on the part of the population towards modern medicine.

The present analysis proposes to challenge these various assumptions and show that modern medical practice in Thailand is in many ways not that much different from that found in other parts of the world.

Preliminary remarks:

I come to this seminar with the belief that I have much to learn from the experiences and knowledge of members of this group. I should say at the outset that I speak from a single experience of research in Thailand, since I began to pursue my interest in SEAsian studies and more particularly in Thailand only about 18 months ago.

On the other hand, I must say that, though I am not familiar with this particular region, I have been involved in anthropological research for more than 20 years in African countries and in my own country and working on medical anthropological issues during the last 12 to 13 years. I should think, then, that all this experience is of a certain relevance to my work in Thailand and to the possibility of understanding fairly quickly what is going on in this country.

I think the analysis I shall now put forward is somewhat contrary to the specialized literature, though no dogma is intended. I shall also try to avoid, as much as possible, getting into very technical language in the documentation and concepts on which I rely to make my point.

A bit of history:

I expect that many of you will already know the events to which I will now refer, but I find it useful to recall these bits of information, again, to make sure we start with the same data.

Though there is still room for improvement in the public health organization in the country, one could say that a lot has already been accomplished, thanks to a particular historical 'alliance', I may term it, between the royal family and the American missionaries who established themselves in Siam during the first half of the 19th century.

It happened that some of the missionaries who came to Siam
were physicians and they were able to show the members of the royal family of that time some recent developments in modern medicine. (In what follows I shall use the term biomedicine to designate allopathic medicine). They were probably quite convincing because as early as 1860, one woman had already returned from the United States having being trained as a nurse.

By the end of the 19th century, the first School of Medicine had already been established in Krungtep. During the first quarter of the 20th century a six-year training in medicine was developed at Siriraj.

Prince Mahidol himself went to the USA and was educated at the Harvard School of Medicine; his wife, the Princess Mother, is herself a nurse graduated from Siriraj. Moreover, the Rockefeller Foundation got involved in the building of the medical program in Thailand after discussions with Prince Mahidol. It insisted on an elitist training for doctors and this was to have an enduring effect on the development of the profession in the country. It is no surprise, therefore, that biomedicine is now what it is in Thailand. It all started with certain political choices and, perhaps, the personal orientation of the royal family.

But this is not to say that because the king and his court were eager to develop biomedicine in their country and use it for themselves that this enthusiasm had to be shared by the general population. Actually, it is not until fairly recently that one could say the Thai people began to use biomedicine with increasing frequency. Statistics from the Ministry of Public Health show that in 1985, about 70% of the population consulted doctors when sick.

Using biomedicine does not mean, however, that people do not make use of other forms of treatment, from plants to drugs bought in shops, or even magical practices. What I want to put forward here is, first, that there is an historical background which explains the present situation of biomedicine in Thailand and second, that since the beginning of the 80s, more and more people make use of biomedicine in the country.

Chiangmai, the town where I have done my research, is a quite good example of the presence of biomedicine in Thailand. There are many hospitals, doctors and nurses there and, according to what I have observed, many people use the health services whether in government hospitals or in private hospitals and clinics. This area is also a part of the country where much research related to biomedicine has been done.

I will not detail all those works but rather focus on some of them which came to conclusions that makes Chiangmai a rather special case. For the purpose of my argument I have decided to select two main aspects, one which has to do with the doctors' behaviour and the other with that of the population. The idea is to investigate how far previous analyses of these behaviours give a good picture of the situation as it is.

Doctors' behaviour:

It has been argued that patients in the Chiangmai area were able to get treatment according to their way of life and their own customs. The research dealing with this issue is very interesting because it comes to conclusions which are very different from those
arrived at in many other settings in the world. The assumptions which underlie this statement have to do with the power of the clients when consulting the doctor or other medical personnel. For various reasons, sick people would be able sometimes to ask that the doctor come to their house and treat them in an environment more familiar to them than the hospital. Also, doctors would be ready to accept payment later if their client did not have money to do so on the day of consultation. Doctors would equally be ready to accept that people take traditional medicine at the same time as they are engaged in a biomedical treatment. All those situations would then demonstrate that clients can 'negotiate' with doctors. This would of course be a clear indication of the transformation of the relation of power between doctor and client.

However fascinating, those conclusions cannot stand against what we know of the history of medicine in Thailand, nor are they supported by information gathered during fieldwork in Chiangmai. We already know that the teaching of medicine set up in Thailand through royal initiative was very elitist and aimed at professionalization. Though royalty stopped subsidizing the training of doctors in the country many years ago, there is no evidence that there has been much change since. This means that doctors are educated as highly skilled professionals neither able nor prepared to communicate much with their clients. Actually, this situation is the same in almost all other countries. Moreover, other studies have demonstrated quite clearly that most doctors come from an upper or upper-middle class, urban background.

All these features do not allow doctors to meet their patients on equal terms, from the very start. It is then difficult to see how patients could be in a position to 'negotiate' power.

On the payment of fees, when questioned about the possibility that doctors may agree to delay payment, the overwhelming majority of doctors and nurses interviewed answered negatively. They argued that when patients come to a private clinic, they know that they have to pay. If they cannot afford to pay, then all they have to do is to go to a government hospital; even private hospitals may be ready to allow a delay in payment. This is not possible in a private clinic. Doctors may agree to cut the dosage of a prescription in order that the patient can pay or even give a few pills free. But they will not accept postponement for a consultation.

The answer is also quite definitely negative on the possibility of visiting patients at home. This could happen if the doctor knows the patient personally or is appointed as family doctor and paid monthly for this service. These situations occur rather rarely. Doctors and nurses say that sick persons have to come to the clinic or the hospital if they want to be treated.

When asked if doctors accept that their patients may use other medicines when they are treated in hospitals, doctors and nurses responded that this is possible, that some physicians accept this, if it does not do any harm to the patient and has no contrary effect to the biomedical treatment. Some of them add that they accepted only because it could help psychologically. In other words, this type of acceptation has nothing to do with ‘negotiating’ or losing power in the therapeutic relation.

I came across another situation which could be considered a
negotiation between doctors and clients. It has to do with the request by pregnant women to have caesarian section in order to satisfy recommendations of auspicious time got through consultation with an astrologer. Actually, it does not seem that many doctors are ready to accede to client's requests for caesarian section. But those who do it get more money for this more technical procedure. This situation is probably closer to a negotiation of power between patient and doctor, but it should not be associated with any kind of flexibility on the part of the physician, but rather on the more general ground of access to money. If there is power anywhere, it is in the race for money.

The evidence so far is that doctors and medical personnel do not accept in any way the modification of clinical procedures or allow negotiation with their patients. If one does not find 'flexibility' in the behaviour of doctors, maybe it could be discovered in the population's compliance with biomedicine, i.e. readiness to accept the biomedical diagnostic, treatment or other procedures requested by medical personnel.

Behaviour of the population:

One particular sector of public health where there seems to be obvious compliance on the part of the population, particularly in the north of Thailand, is child delivery and family planning. Statistics show that there has been a steadily and quite drastic decrease in childbirth in the whole country, a situation even more accentuated in the north. Documentation shows that by the middle of the 70's, the majority of women in the Chiangmai area were willing to have child delivery in hospital. Doctors and nurses met during fieldwork fully agreed that women were no more interested in having their babies at home and considered that the hospital setting was probably the best place to have delivery. Medical personnel also agreed that two or three children per family was more and more widely accepted as a limit. Contraception and sterilisation would equally be viewed as good means to 'keep to the standard.'

These behaviours can be interpreted as indications that the population has assimilated the medical and public health discourses on these particularly sensible matters and that individuals take the appropriate measures accordingly. Interviews with doctors and nurses in Chiangmai lead to different conclusions.

One can admit, of course, that the accessibility of public health services and government hospitals has facilitated the acceptance by women of child delivery according to biomedical practices. Relying very pragmatically upon the technical successes of biomedicine, Thai women were gradually convinced that going to hospital to deliver their babies was more secure and painless. This aspect (pain) seems to be particularly important.

In my opinion, it still has to be explained why Thai women have made the choice to have child delivery in hospitals, because there are many other examples in other countries where this situation differs though they have a public health network which could be looked at as very similar to the one found in Thailand. Why does it seem so widely accepted by those women? This most probably has to do with the long-established penetration of biomedicine in the country.

Starting with the fact that most Thai babies are born in hospitals, a link has then to be made between this behaviour and the
impact of birth control policies. Quite curiously, the relation between those two phenomena is not pinpointed. It becomes quite obvious, however, in the interviews with medical personnel. It is when women come to hospital for delivering their babies that information on contraception and sterilisation can be passed on to them. Of course, there are many campaigns organised by the state aiming at birth control and family planning, but these messages have much more weight and individuals are more receptive when they are in the actual experience of childbirth. The clinical setting makes it a very good opportunity for doctors and nurses to reiterate the government's discourse as it is part of their 'mandate'.

Doctors are able to 'sell' the idea of using contraceptive pills, the use of which seems to be very widespread. Injection of depo-provera, even if this product is banned in the United States, is also provided because it lasts longer (2 to 3 months) and does not necessitate the same care as the ingestion of daily pills. It seems that this last means is often used amongst the 'hill tribes'. I was also told that women do not always receive the information which would be required about this drug and are enticed to accept it through gifts from medical personnel.

Sterilisation is also offered when a woman has already had two or three children. This intervention is then performed when she comes to the hospital to have child delivery.

Once again, this information and these suggestions are made to women when they are in the territory of the medical personnel, i.e. the hospital, and not necessarily in a position to offer their point of view. It is true that the woman has to discuss this question with her husband who has to sign a form of consent. The reverse situation, a woman having to sign if her husband has a vasectomy, does not apply. Most of the time, men refuse the intervention leaving their wives with the burden of making this decision.

It is difficult, one should say, to look at these data as indications of the compliance of the population towards medical recommendations, nor is there greater possibility of identifying any form of flexibility on the part of the medical personnel in those procedures.

Conclusion:
The various elements which have been presented in this paper will suffice to demonstrate, I hope, that the hypotheses which claim to show flexibility on the part of doctors or medical personnel towards the clients' ways of life do not stand against the historical context in which the medical system in Thailand has been built, nor against the data gathered during my research. I am left with the conclusion that the way biomedicine is being practised in Chiangmai (and there is no ground to make me think at the moment that the situation could be different elsewhere in the country) has more to do with the way doctors are trained as professionals whether in that country or anywhere else. There are, of course, some practices which tend to make Thai practitioners different from their colleagues in other countries. But discussions with doctors and nurses make it clear that the power and the control of the clinical encounter still lies in the hands of the doctors.
data from white tai and nung

B.J. Terwiel

In June 1990, under the auspices of the Mainland Southeast Asian Calendrical Systems Project, funded by the Australian Research Council, Anthony Diller and I visited Tai-speaking peoples in Vietnam. We had the good fortune to be hosted by the Program for Thai Studies in Vietnam, which arranged for permits to travel in areas outside the ordinary tourist itineraries. Upon arrival at Hanoi airport we were met by the Program Director, Professor CÁ³am C´¿ng and his deputy, Professor CÁ³am Tr$ong.

Much of our time in Hanoi was taken up with the formal meetings in various departments of the University of Hanoi and at institutes of the Vietnam Social Sciences Committee. During these meetings we had both time to explain our research interests and to engage in a lively debate with our Vietnamese colleagues on questions relating to ethnic and linguistic divisions among the Tai, on problems relating to scripts and on time-reckoning systems.

While in Hanoi we had the opportunity to visit Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum and museum, and to examine an ethnographic collection. The chief purpose of our journey, however, was to visit Tai peoples. Our hosts had prepared a three-day trip westwards from Hanoi to a White Tai community (in Maich³au), not far from the border with Laos, and a two-day journey north of the capital, to the Tai Nung living in the vicinity of L$angs¿n, at the border with China. These journeys were made in a Russian jeep, supplied by the university and driven by one of the university drivers. Professors CÁ³am C´¿ng and CÁ³am Tr$ong, an interpreter, and some other members of the Program for Thai Studies accompanied us on both excursions.

Even during the short time of our visit, we collected much information on the literature, customs, and language of the people with whom we came in contact. The presence of CÁ³am Tr$ong, the leading ethnographer of the Tai of Vietnam, who was always willing to help, elaborate and explain, greatly assisted us in the accumulation of voluminous fieldnotes. In a short report such as this it is impossible to convey more than a few snippets of information from those notes.

Coming from Hanoi, the journey to Maich³au was remarkable in that our jeep had to cross a mountain range which once over the highest point, revealed a different landscape: steep hillsides enclosing long valleys, the valley floor dominated by rice fields. To our eyes, a typical 'mueang' landscape.

The area of Maich³au, we were told, has a population of 42,000 with just over 67 per cent Tai-speakers. There is a traditional literature, but the distinctive White and Black Tai script is only known to some of the elders. We gained the impression that at present there is a growing interest in the fostering and preservation of the cultures of various minorities, and whenever the opportunity arose our hosts took pains to point this out to local dignitaries.
We visited two White Tai houses. For the ethnographer these houses, and those observed in passing, presented some remarkable features. They differ from Black Tai houses in that they are not crowned with 'horns' (khaw kut), that they have an even number of rooms, an even number of windows, and that the entrance ladder has an even number of steps. The roof-line also differs, in that the roofline of the Black Tai house is rounded 'like a turtle shell', while that of the White Tai has a straight front and back. The rice harvest, in sheaves, was stored on a large platform high above the central part of the floor (not in separate storage houses). Towards the back of the house was the large hearth, in which three hearth-stones provide a resting place for a pot. These stones are important (for example, the most solemn oath is made on these hearth stones).

En route to the Nung-speaking area we were again struck by the landscape. Compared to that around Maich'au it was more open, there were no well-defined valley beds, no strict contrast between valley and mountain slope. Here rice was grown in terraced fields. The preoccupation with the differences in height between rice fields was clear from observing the spectacular water wheels, powered by the force of the stream and lifting the water to a system of bamboo tubes that conveyed water over long distances. Such irrigation machinery is also known in Lanna and among the Tai Khamti of Chowkham (India).

In L$angs\'n we were shown a video-film made in 1988 among the Nung. The subject of the film was a spectacular ceremony called Lao Thaen, a ritual during which a group of persons goes on a shamanistic journey, and becomes possessed by the Thaen, or 'gods'. The ritual shown in the film appeared to be a re-enactment, but an authentic ethnographic recording. The ceremony was obviously a major event, attended by large crowds, and lasting three days and three nights. In this case the people in charge of the ritual were a group of elderly
women who chanted, sang and acted out their whole journey to the world of the Thaen. Much of this journey was made on (imaginary) horseback, rocking to and fro, sometimes lashing with the bridle, accompanied by the sound of the horse-bells. During the journey the women [called mae thap, cf. the Thai] face many obstacles. They have to cross an immense lake, enter unseen canoes, and all the while chanting and wielding imaginary paddles, slowly move across the expanse. They are attacked by vicious birds, venomous snakes and demons, they even have to cross a mountain that is ablaze. At one stage they enter the world of dead children, and become like children themselves, the audience taking part in the fun and games that ensued. The women undauntedly face terrible risks, move through water, ride their horses high in the sky, and show that they have become invulnerable by sitting on sharp spikes. Upon reaching the women the world of the Thaen, these enter their bodies: the women have become the gods. The chief mae thap becomes the Lord of the Thaen. From this moment onward they behave like gods, walking around with authority, going on an inspection tour and making god-like statements. The ceremony ends with the women's return to the human world.

In later discussions it became clear that women do not have exclusive right over this important ritual. Our hosts also pointed out that there are close parallels between Lao Thaen and the Black and White Tai state rituals (see also Sylvestre, 1918:42-56; Sumitr, 1980:33). For myself, the viewing of the Lao Thaen ritual was a reminder of the fact that the role of women in Tai religion may benefit from being studied in a non-Buddhist environment, such as that among the Tai of Vietnam.

These notes represent only two examples out of voluminous notes made during this field trip. They should serve as a stimulus to the growing number of researchers who are becoming interested in Tai studies. For this Newsletter it remains to be told that on behalf of our Calendrical Project I signed an agreement with representatives of the university to foster ways of further cooperation. This agreement opens the way for future cooperation and the first to benefit from this is Peter Ross, one of Dr Diller's students whose departure for Hanoi is imminent.

References

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On referring to Thai-related languages in Vietnam

Anthony Diller

The Program for Thai Studies in Vietnam (henceforth PTSV) has recently been established at the Centre of Cooperation for Vietnamese Studies, Hanoi University. (See Terwiel, this issue of TYN, for details of a recent visit to this Program and field trips arranged
under its auspices.) PTSV brings together a dozen or so experts in linguistic, philological-historical and cultural studies with research interests focusing on the various Tai peoples of Vietnam Ñ 'Tai' in the inclusive language-family sense (see below).

A number of the members of the research group are themselves native speakers of one or more Tai varieties. PTSV thus may come to play an important coordinating role among scholars and institutions within Vietnam; it also has the potential to provide liaison and foster research cooperation with the international community of scholars interested in Thai (/Tai) studies. The future of the PTSV will depend on funding and other support that it can obtain locally and internationally; also on future Vietnamese government policies relating to the treatment of minority populations in general and of the over two million speakers of Tai varieties in particular. Will emphasis be placed once again, as it has been in the past, on assimilating minority peoples to dominant Vietnamese linguistic and cultural norms, or will minority languages and traditions be tolerated (or even promoted)? The success of PTSV, if not its fate, will depend on how this question is answered by those ruling Vietnam.

The purpose of what follows is to clarify some points of ethnolinguistic nomenclature and Tai linguistic subgrouping reflecting current practices of the PTSV and of other Vietnamese authorities.

By way of introduction, readers of the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter may well be aware of parallel issues in the Yunnan case. The term 'Dai' (Pinyin romanisation for a syllable sounding like 'Tai', i.e. with unaspirated voiceless initial consonant) refers to one specific official 'nationality' as recognized by Chinese administrative authorities. This is approximately equivalent to 'speakers of Tai languages resident in Yunnan'. (Note that the Chinese-designated nationalities 'Zhuang' and 'Buyi' are similarly defined 'provincially' on the basis of residence in Guangxi and Guizhou respectively.) 'Dai' thus combines the Tai-Lue-speaking people of the Sipsongpanna area --- the majority Tai group in Yunnan --- with other smaller groups of Tais speaking quite distinct varieties -- in particular, Dehong, arguably a close relative of Shan varieties in Burma. In addition to dialect divergence, (Tai-)Lue and (Tai-)Dehong differ markedly with respect to their traditional writing systems, as well as in a number of features of more ethnographic concern.

Thus, in Chinese usage, Lue speakers would not be officially 'Dai' if, say, they happened to be Thai nationals resident in Thailand (or Vietnamese citizens in Vietnam, where they are referred to with the spelling L$; see below) and even in Yunnan proper 'Dai' is not equivalent to '(Tai-)Lue'. Nor is 'Dai' (or 'Tai') used alone in Chinese sources to refer to the (Tai) language family as a whole: rather the hybrid terms Zhuang-Dai (for 'Tai proper' in the sense of Fang-Kuei Li, 1977) and Zhuang-Dong (for the macro-family including more distant varieties) are used.

Nor is the term 'Tai' in Western sources entirely uncontroversial. Although Fang-Kuei Li and others have used this term regularly to refer to the language family as a whole, some have preferred to restrict the term to those who actually refer to themselves with the term 'Tai' or a variant cognate: essentially to the Central and Southwestern branches of the 'Tai' family in the sense
of Li (1977). (Note that Lao presents a problem in this regard, as Lao speakers do not regularly refer to themselves as 'Tai/Thai' -- unless, of course, they are among the 23 million or so 'Thai-Isan' speakers of Lao varieties current in Thailand's northeast.)

Turning to Vietnam, we note some similar questions of nomenclature. In semi-official Vietnamese sources predating the establishment of PTSV, such as Nguy<ang Nghi>em Van (1986), the hybrid term T'y-Th‡y is used to refer to language varieties in Vietnam classified (by Western scholarship at least) as belonging to the Tai language family. Eight officially recognized varieties are listed in the following table with population estimates from the above source (pp. 156-200); Li's (1977) classification, based on three main branches of the Tai family, is also indicated for each variety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official designation</th>
<th>Other names</th>
<th>Population (1986)</th>
<th>Tai branch (Li, 1977)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T'y</td>
<td>Th&gt;ao</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th‡y</td>
<td>T‡y</td>
<td>760,000</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(and subgroups)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nng</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>560,000</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S‡n Chay</td>
<td>Cao-Lan</td>
<td>77,000</td>
<td>Central (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gi‡y</td>
<td>Sa, Nh&lt;#ang</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'o</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L$'</td>
<td>Nhu&gt;n,</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du&gt;n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B— Y</td>
<td>P&gt;u Y, Trung Gia,</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly in the source indicated above, the inclusive label T’y-Th‡y has been formed by combining the two most numerous groups: (1) the T’y (or Th>@o, as this group has usually been referred to in Western sources), in Li's Central branch of the Tai family, who live in many scattered communities mainly in the northeast catchment area of the Red River, especially along its tributary, the River Claire; and (2) the Th‡y, in Li's Southwestern group, who live mainly in rather cohesive areal units in the southwestern Red River catchment area, especially in upland reaches of the Black River. This official grouping, Th‡y, is clearly composed of the two main subgroups, usually referred to as White and Black Tai (T‡y-Khao, T‡y-¶<am). Although these varieties are close lexically and in other linguistic terms, and also share the same writing system, the division is a salient one for the speakers themselves. The term 'Red Tai' is also found in Western sources, but we were told by members of PTSV that people referring to themselves as T‡y-¶aeng are more properly 'Tais of Mu'ang ¶aeng' and a subgroup of T‡y-¶<am. Perhaps the same could be said of so-called Phu-Tai speakers in Vietnam, but this is presently unclear.

Historically, speech communities ancestral to (1) the T’y and (2) the Th‡y have probably been represented in approximately the present loci for at least 700 years; N the T’y, perhaps for much longer. Other groups appear to have entered the watershed of the Red
River more recently. Only a proportion of the Nng have done so to this day, with the majority of the Nng people in Vietnam remaining in the headwaters of the You-Zuo-Xi system (draining through Canton). The smaller groups (5-8 in the Table) are located in border regions and, according to PTSV scholars, there is historical evidence that the Northern-branch groups arrived in their present areas within the past two or three hundred years.

The major innovation in PTSV’s linguistic nomenclature lies in using the term Th‡y in sense of the former designation Tˆy-Th‡y, i.e. as a cover term bringing together all Tai groups in Vietnam. The spellings Th‡y and T‡y had earlier been used to refer to Southwestern groups only. (Note that Th‡i is the preferred way of referring to Thai nationals in Thailand.) Whether this usage will be widely or officially accepted remains to be seen; it is perhaps an important symbolic token of the PTSV enterprise and of its current (pan-Th‡y) ideological orientation.

References

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Editorial Comment

This is the tenth issue of the Newsletter and it may be appropriate to make a brief review of both it and the Project in general, and the future. Unfortunately our prospects are not very bright. But first, the good news, what has been achieved with the resources available.

The achievement is that we have not only been able to conduct research in the region, particularly on Tai-speaking communities in Yunnan, but have also created a source of information and a centre of interest through the Newsletter. The translations from Chinese sources have been commended and used by many of our readers. The Newsletter and the Project have largely been the concern of the Department of Anthropology, but within The Australian National University we have acted as a forum for research and discussion on the region. In this issue, for instance, we report on the work of Diller and Terwiel in Vietnam, which is not part of the Project, but has a definite convergence of interests. In addition to the Newsletter the Project has translated and published From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai by Condominas and is responsible for Ethnic Groups across National Boundaries to be issued soon by the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. A new edition of Furnivall The Fashioning of Leviathan should be on the market by the end of the year. A computerized bibliography and data base (the latter initially comprising the glossary compiled by the late Richard Davis) is being prepared and should be tested shortly. All this activity has largely been financed by the Research School of Pacific Studies and out of the annual budget of the Department of Anthropology.

The address of the Thai Ambassador to Australia, published in
this issue, singles out the Thai-Yunnan Project for commendation - and he had complimentary remarks about the Newsletter, which were not included in the formal text. Nevertheless, the Project and The Australian National University, with one important exception, have not shared in the funds that have become available. The exception is well-deserved recognition of the Thai-language teaching program conducted for many years by Dr. Anthony Diller.

It now appears that not only will the Thai-Yunnan Project not have any recognition from Australian Government instrumentalities, despite commendations of the Thai Ambassador, but with a dwindling research budget, the Research School of Pacific Studies has hard choices to make and we have had to give way to sexier subjects. This is particularly unfortunate because the Project, and the Department of Anthropology, considers there is an urgent necessity for the development of Australian research on Burma, which has largely been neglected for the last twenty years.

One of the principal assumptions of the Project at its initiation was that the region of northern Southeast Asia and Southwestern China shared so much in history, ethnicity, culture, geography and politics, that we would try as much as possible to provide a basis for intellectual integration. Unfortunately the title has been interpreted by some to mean only the connections between Thailand and Yunnan. A glance back to Newsletter No. 1 should correct this notion. This issue of the Newsletter has important translations from Thai and Chinese on contemporary Burmese events, which serve to highlight the necessity for Australian scholarship to move into this neglected area.

In the circumstances it is difficult to predict either the future of the Project or of the Newsletter. We hope our translation program will continue for some time, but it had already been decided quite independently that this particular program should wind down. We set out to provide a sample of Chinese works on the region both as a source of data and as an indication to non-Chinese scholars of the directions that Chinese scholarship was taking. The International Thai Conference in Kunming has now brought to the English-language scholarly audience a comprehensive selection of that scholarship and we see our own task as now changing. The editor, with the support of the Department of Anthropology, guarantees that there will be at least two more numbers of the Newsletter, but its continuation now really depends on our readership. If readers will support us by sending in material for publication, comments, articles, reviews and translations we shall be able to continue into the future. We require the intellectual support of our readership if we are to continue. The Newsletter is not a refereed journal, but we hope we do maintain responsible and scholarly standards.

* * *
Translations

A Study of Tai Society
(Yunnan People's Publishing House, 1988
by Cao Chenzhang
summary of Chinese text by Jiang Ren)
Introduction

The Tai have a population of around 834,000, mainly distributed in Southwest Yunnan. The regions inhabited by the Tai are mainly Xishuangbanna Dai3 Autonomous Prefecture, Dehong Dai and jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Gengma Dai and Wa Autonomous County, Xinping Yi and Dai Autonomous County and Yuanjiang Hani, Yi and Dai autonomous County.

Tai communities in these areas had remained in different stages of development. Each had its own features of land ownership, class polarization, exploitation and political system. These phenomena reflect the process of the transformation of Tai society from serfdom to a feudal system. In Yuanjiang, Xinping, and Jingdong the Tai people lived together with the Han and as a result they adopted more Han culture and transferred to a feudal system at an earlier period. The Sipsongpanna Tai community had a slower pace of development and maintained serfdom.

All land in Sipsongpanna, including all natural resources such as forests and rivers belonged to the Cawphaendin [often written in Pinyin as Zhaopianling, glossed in English as 'king'. ed.]. The king conferred the title of cawmoeng (Zhaomeng, 'master of the land') upon his relatives and trusted followers. With the title went a territory and the people who lived on it. The title and privileges were hereditary. Part of the land became the lord's manor, while part would be allocated to serfs through the communes. Serfs paid taxes and had other obligations. As in theory all land belonged to the king, no land sale, land mortgage or transfer was allowed.

Serf 'owners' including the king, constituted 8% of the population. Serfs were of two main ranks - taimoeng (people of the mŸang, or founding villagers) accounted for about 55% of households. The other category was the kunhaengcaw (gunhengzhao, 'people belonging to the master') which accounted for about 39%. There was another small category of people, distant relatives of the king granted land of their own (i.e. not subject to the commune).

Tai societies in other areas such as Menglian, Gengma and Dehong, more or less maintained serfdom. In areas where social and economic development were at a faster pace, the system of the rural commune had gradually dissolved and serfs came to possess the land they used as de facto owners. Landlords began to come into being.

This is a brief description of Tai society prior to the reform under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

The book is divided into five chapters.

Chapter One: Transformation from primitive society to class society. Divided into four sections
Section A describes the life of the ancestors of the Tai in remote antiquity, based on ancient Tai epics. The lived on hunting and gradually transferred to cultivation (stories about Balawu). The Tai literature divides the development of their society into three periods. During the first period there were no rulers, no monasteries and no taxes and other obligations. During the second period chiefs came into being, but still no monasteries or taxes. The third period saw the existence of chiefs, monasteries, taxes and other obligations.

There is another way to divide the development of Tai society.
The first period is called the 'period of the hunters' which more or less corresponds to the second period above. The second is the period of chiefs for the management of irrigation works. It shows the emergence of an agricultural economy. The third is the 'period of religious leaders' which indicates the emergence of social classification beyond the demands of economic activity.

Section B focuses on the structure of the Tai clan-commune. Each clan-commune consisted of the four generations of descendants of a single ancestor. No marriage was allowed within this group. Each clan-commune had its own land which could not be sold or mortgaged, its own chief and deity who was usually the spirit of the ancestor of the clan.

Section C describes the Tai rural commune and its transformation into a class society. During this period changes in technology caused changes in the social structure. Collective cultivation was replaced by cultivation by the family unit. As a result clan-communes gradually disappeared and rural communes based on regions replaced those based on consanguinity. However in some regions clan-communes and clan land were maintained.

Section D describes the historical political system of the Tai. As early as the first and second centuries the Tai tribes formed an association which was called Shan in the Chinese historical records.

Chapter Two: Tai slavery and its character.

This chapter concludes that Tai slavery should be characterized as 'patriarchal slavery'. Slavery appeared during the 7th and 8th Centuries.

Section A discusses Tai slavery as reflected in Tai classical literature. Masters usually treated their slaves as adopted family members. They were fed and clothed in exchange for their labour.

Section B discusses slavery as it remained in Tai society at the time of the establishment of the PRC. Slaves were held by their masters as adopted children, though they could be sold.

Section C sums up the nature of Tai slavery: 1) the number of slaves was small; and 2) Tai slavery was never fully developed.

Chapter Three: The establishment of serfdom.

Serfdom was established between the 12th and 14th Centuries.

In Section A Tai serfdom is characterized as 'oriental serfdom' which is characterized by the fact that from the point of view of the land owners, serfs did not own, but were only attached to the land; and by the fact that from the point of view of the commune, the serfs were the real possessors. The ancient law of Sipsongpanna provided that 'anybody born [in the territory] is the serf of the king. Every hair of the serf is the property of the king'.

Section B describes the operation of the Tai commune system. With the appearance of serfdom communes were consolidated, rather than being dissolved. Serfs paid taxes and discharged their obligations through the administration of the commune.

Section C relates the process through which the kings acquired their private land. In addition to imposing taxes on the communes, the Tai rulers converted land held by the communes into land held by cawmoeng or porlong as well as into private land of the king. Land in
the latter category was directly managed by the ruler.

Section D discusses the feature of Tai land tenure in which, though theoretically owned by the king, in practice the largest proportion was owned by the communes. The features of ownership were as follows: in theory all land belonged to the supreme ruler, the king, while in practice was divided into two categories - 'owners' land' and 'serfs' land'. The former, which composed 14% of the total, included the king's private land, caw moeng's land and porliang's land. Serfs' land, which accounted for 77%, included that possed by rural and clan communes. The other 7% included th freemen's land and serfs' gardens.

The following two sections deal with the political system, including enfoeffment and power struggles and social conflicts during the 14th-15th Centuries.

Chapter Four: The transformation from serfdom to landlordism.

The chapter discusses the cause and processes of such transformation.

Section A describes economic development during the Ming and Qing Dynasties and its impact on the development of the communes system. Regular reallocation of land among the serfs by the commune came to an end. Land sales began to occur in some areas.

Section B describes the process of transformation and the gradual dissolution of the communes.

Section C describes the emergence of ownership by landlords. Before 1950 the various Tai areas were at different stages of social and economic development. In Sipsongpanna communes were maintained, while in Dehong, communes dissolved with the emergence of landlord-tenant-peasant relationships.

Chapter Five: Causes of the slow development of Tai society.

The last chapter probes the causes which hampered Tai society from developing at a faster pace. They are the commune system, the rigid totalitarian regime, the single crop, small-scale farming economy, the religious beliefs of the Tai people and the small-scale family structure.

* * *

Burma's Political Situation before the General Election

Lin Xixing

(A summary from the original Chinese, Southeast Asian Studies, 67 (No.1 1990: 50-56) Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Jinan University, by Jiang Ren)

Since 18 September, 1988, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), under the leadership of General Saw Maung, has taken over political control in Burma. Following this, a series of changes have taken place, such as the army has been ordered to observe 'neutrality' in the power struggle and some new economic measures have been adopted. However, the new organs of state constitute the continuation of the old regime under disguise, for Ne Win and his followers still
pull strings behind the scenes. The recent developments are compatible with Ne Win's design which can be summarized as: a) maintaining stability, while clearing the dissidents out, of the army; b) establishing a multi-party government which is under the stringent control of the army, while a more moderate political environment will be maintained under the control of such a government; and c) readjusting the economic situation with the promotion of economic reform and ending economic isolation.

The success of this design largely depends on solidarity within the army, the smooth development of economic relationships with other countries, and, of course, the cooperation of the dissidents. Basically, there are two political groupings existing and competing with each other: the army and the dissidents with Aung San Suu Kyi as leader, which include all anti-army factions, no matter what backgrounds they have (ie, religious, ethnic, or ideological). Though the dissidents appear to be very strong, the army holds more solid strength as it has a long-established basis.

Ne Win is a professional armyman with high prestige in military circles. Nobody, except Aung San Suu Kyi, Aung San's daughter, dares to challenge his position publicly. He is called 'the Great Father' by the people close to him, and 'the Grand Old Man' by his other followers. All the generals who are in power today are selected by him. The number of the military is up to 200,000, and the army accounts for 90%.

The leading nucleus of the army consists of three types of people: a) those who participated in the war of independence which was led by Ne Win and therefore are influenced deeply by nationalism; b) those who joined the army after the 1948 Independence. Most of them graduated from the Maymyo Military Defence Academy which was established in the 1950s and praised as 'the Burmese West Point'; those in this group, therefore, uphold a strong consciousness of democracy as a result of the education they received in the 1950s; and c) those who joined the army after the 1962 Coup. They account for the largest proportion of those ranking from first lieutenant to major. In addition to the army force, Ne Win set up the secret police force, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Its main task is to keep watch on people, especially those officers 'who are influenced by liberal tendencies.' The MIS used to be under the charge of Tin Oo who was arrested in May 1983. Following this, the MIS was reorganized together with the reorganization of the National Intelligence Agency. The reorganized National Intelligence Agency in fact became a consultative panel responsible for the submission to the President of reports from other agencies, after assessment.

At present, it appears that Ne Win's followers still hold power. They are attempting to achieve a sort of limited democracy on one hand, while strengthening military force, especially the intelligence force, on the other. In 1984, Ne Win appointed Khin Nyunt as the head of the National Intelligence Agency. It is said that Khin Nyunt is a hard liner who has no sympathy with any desire for democracy. Some people said that General Saw Maung is moderate and steady, while others say he is a hard liner and at present acts according to Ne Win's instruction. He has affirmed that he respects Ne Win as he does his parents, therefore he asks for Ne Win's instruction before he takes any action. The Committee, with Saw Maung as its
chairman, consists of 19 members, and among them are 9 Commanders of Military Areas. Khin Nyunt, though being formally appointed only as first secretary, appears to be more powerful than Saw Maung. Since the army's separation from the Party (which took place in September 1988), the military authorities only permit the publication of the official newspaper Working People’s Daily and the Do’ Aye’ (‘our affairs’) which is circulated within the army. The slogan of the 'Do’ Aye’ is that 'The Army is your parents. Do not believe any alien. Do not believe anyone except your own blood.' In general, the army is at present still stable under the control of Ne Win and his followers.

At present, the following factors are in favour of the current Burmese government: the Sino-Burmeses relationship, the situation along the Sino-Burmese and the Thai-Burmese borders, and the Thai-Burmese relationship. The Burmese army has made a breakthrough achieving the disintegration of some anti-government armed forces - along the Sino-Burmese border, the formal Burmese Communist Party's army consisting mainly (around 90%) of minority peoples (mainly the). They joined the armed insurrection under the inspiration of nationalism and anti-government feeling, not caused by any ideology. Recently, Wa, Shan and Keqing6 nationalities split with the Communist party and organized their own armed force. Some of them have reached compromise with the government.

The Burmese government has also made some progress in foreign relations. On 20 October 1989 a Burmese delegation, headed by the Deputy Chairman of the State Law and order restoration Council (SLORC), visited China. Both sides expressed their willingness to support each other and to continue the friendship established by their revolutionary founders. Sino-Burmese trade has developed dramatically and the average annual trade value between the two amounts to US$1.5 billion7. Thailand has acquiesced in the Burmese army's attack on the anti-government forces. Since June 1989, the army has been allowed to pursue the anti-government forces onto Thai territory. Talks between the two have been held concerning the adoption of an open-door policy by Burma, fishing in Burmese territorial waters and repatriation of Burmese students taking asylum in Thailand. Economic exchanges and communications between the two have also increased. In addition, since the Council came to power, Burma has sold fishing licenses and logging licenses to Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Malaysia.

Though the Western states still enforce economic sanctions against Burma, Japan, the main financial supporter of Burma, takes a rather lenient attitude. Japan currently provides annual financial aid (US$2-2.3 hundred million/year) to Burma. Japan recognized the Saw Maung Government on the day following the announcement of the election scheduled by the Burmese government. Singapore and South Korea, Burma's main trading partners, are also quite willing to help the current regime. Lee Kuan Yew, the President of Singapore, thought that a military government would be in a better position to maintain political stability in Burma.

On the other hand, there are several factors which may prejudice the success of the Ne Win design. First, within the army there are two tendencies. One is the pro-democracy tendency. In September 1988, some units of the army participated in the pro-democracy demonstration. The army afterwards underwent
rectification ordered by Ne Win. The other one is the anti-democracy feeling. For instance, on 14 January 1989 when Aung San Suu Kyi held her election campaign in Irrawaddy Province, the Commander of the Southwest Military Region detained her entourage and warned her 'Forget about your democracy! Even if you could win the election, we can always organize another military coup.'

Secondly, Khin Nyunt, as the head of the Intelligence Service, does not have enough prestige and popularity to support his authority. When he calls meetings, some senior officers simply refuse to attend.

Thirdly, there are different factions within the army. Two institutes exist in Burma to provide trained army officers: Maymyo Academy (as mentioned before), and the Hmawbi Training Centre. The graduates from the former, generally speaking, are more inclined to a democratic and moderate political system, while the graduates from the latter, which embrace most of the top military officers at present in power, support a harsher policy. However, other commentators are of the opinion that it does not matter from which institute these officers graduate. It is the organization (i.e., being at the front with the troops or in the staff officers' section) in which they work that determines their political attitude.

The political and economic situation is another factor which may affect the future of the current government. Inflation is high and beyond control. In the summer of 1989, both the price of rice and of petrol doubled. In mid-1989, the government suspended visas for foreign journalists. In June the enforcement of martial law was reconfirmed together with the censorship on all publications. It is said that army officers have been authorized by SLORC to instruct soldiers to open fire on demonstrators and people in gatherings on any occasion they feel this to be necessary. The government also expressed its firm opposition to any 'foreign intervention'.

At present the confrontation between the army and the dissidents is much intensified and that tension may lead to bloody events at any time. Both martial law and the election law prohibit mass gatherings three months prior to the election. Aung San Suu Kyi, on the other hand, has organized a series of political gatherings since March 1989, despite the provisions of the laws. On 20 July, Aung San Suu Kyi and Tin U were put under house arrest. Her husband was detained on 22 July.

Some people worry that the National League for Democracy may split further as a result of the absence of its leaders. The League is a loosely formed organization with vague political aims. Aung San Suu Kyi, while winning the popularity of the people, is not in a position to solve her followers' practical difficulties. At present, Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters consist of two factions, the pros and cons to communism. This caused the breakup between Aung San Suu Kyi and Aung Gyi. Aung San Suu Kyi said: 'I do not think there are genuine communist forces left in the League. There might have been communists before, but any kind of ideology is no longer trusted by people after the experience of Ne Win's socialism in Burma.' Some student leaders are quite critical of Aung San Suu Kyi. She was criticized as failing to provide any constructive programme of action and caring too much about her personal image.

Aung Gyi, the former deputy chief staff officer, now well-known dissident leader, is more or less taking a middle road. He
criticizes Ne Win while acknowledging Ne Win's achievements. He is sympathetic with the students while warning them that it is too dangerous to confront the army directly. He comments on Aung San Suu Kyi, 'I have no misgivings, while Aung San Suu Kyi has. If I were her I would have as well. She has not contributed anything to Burma and therefore has no prestige. She has lived abroad. She married a foreigner. The only short-cut for her to win some porpularity is to attack the army. The future government in Burma must know how to work together with the army. I was in the army for fifty years. I think her advisors made wrong suggestions. Her main supporters are the communists who behave like the communists did in 1947.' Aung Gyi opposes the use of violence. He upholds pacifism and self-restraint, and encourages compromise with the army.

The army also brings several charges against Aung San Suu Kyi: a) that she has connections with the Communist Party. The army therefore has to crush her attempt to establish a 'red regime'. b) Her husband is a British citizen and has some Indian ancestry. c) She has profaned Buddhism in her speech. d) Her stirring up of people against the army, causes unrest. On the other hand, the army and the authorities at present may not dare to murder Aung San Suu Kyi, though they refuse any talks with the dissidents. Apparently, they just concentrate on attacking their main target, Aung San Suu Kyi, in order to destroy any possible majority vote for any party in the future election, and thus furthering the establishment of a multi-party coalition government.

To sum up, Aung San Suu Kyi has won moral support which is based on the longing for democracy. The youth and students have consistently and enthusiastically sought democracy which has not been satisfied by any Burmese government. Aung San Suu Kyi believes that 'Political reform in Burma should be the first priority. Economic reform can only be the next. It is essential for the political reform that Ne Win must withdraw from the political scene, whether sooner or later.' However, she does not seem clear about the step following Ne Win's withdrawal and has no idea at all about economic reform. Both the poor economic conditions and her personal charm are in her favour in the political arena. On the other hand, she is vulnerable from the perspective of patriotism and nationalism. If she could achieve compromise with the army, she might bring a turn for the better for Burma's political situation. It appears to be too late now. The opportunity has been missed. Since Aung San Suu Kyi's loss of qualification as a candidate for the election caused by the charges of her connection with illegal organizations and with foreign powers, the League has split further. At present, it appears that Aung Gyi would be the person with whom the army may be most willing to cooperate. It is also possible that some army men may wish to leave the army and enter the political arena, or, by reference to the Thai Tinsulanond model [i.e. the General Prem model], the Commander-In-Chief will assume the position of Prime Minister without going through an election.

* * *

A Visit to the Homeland of the Thai Jai:
The forbidden land of the drug king
This terrible journey seemed a matter of some excitement and urgency. The editorial staff of Khaw Phiset decided that as a leading journal of political comment we should interview persons such as Caw Khun Sa who had closed all access to himself since March when the United States of America had issued a warrant for his arrest on ten criminal charges, making it extremely difficult for journalists to bring any news of him to the general public.

After about a week of trying to get permission to travel, we finally got two letters - one introducing us to Khünsai Caijen, the head of the information section, and the other to 'The General', the person on whose head the White House had issued a warrant. With these we could begin our journey to Maehongsorn which could be thought of as the first gate to pass on our way to Shan State. There we would have to prepare for a secret journey, wear hats with the brim turned down and carry knapsacks on our backs like Farang tourists who were still plentiful though it was now the rainy season. Our first intention was to go through the channel of the 'Big Man' (phor liang) of Maehongsorn. He arranged to meet us openly and when we received his phone call, we thought that the most open way may in fact be the most discreet.

The representative, about thirty years old, of the Big Man, dashed our hopes completely with his statement, 'No one is still allowed to go up the mountain, he said. 'On clear nights there are lots of newspapermen, but none of them have been allowed to go. We will be in trouble if you were given permission.' But because we came armed with letters, he said he would make enquiries on our behalf.

We could do nothing but wait - but this was not the intention of the one who had given us the letters. He had insisted in Bangkok that when we get to Maehongsorn we should go up into the mountains at once so as not be the focus of attention for people with various loyalties and purposes. He was right. A reporter from The Nation, a friend whom we met later, told us that in Chiangmai he had a secret phone call from someone he referred to as 'Mr. Red Beret' (ai muak daeng) a term used for a group who worked in secret with the Thai Army of the Third Region.

As for us, on the day that we were to begin our climb (16 July), there were many spine-tingling incidents. For instance there was the man with a walkie-talkie who made us aware that he was watching us keep an appointment with ..., a correspondent for [a foreign news agency]. He took it so seriously, that ... was not willing to risk the journey, being unhappy with the circumstances. Shortly after, while eating, we heard the sound of a walkie-talkie emanating from under the shirt of someone in the restaurant. When we came out there was a vehicle parked outside full of men in uniform and when we entered our pick-up, we saw the same vehicle hidden behind a clump of trees.

All that happened the day we began our climb into the hills; but in fact, before that, we had to wait a week for a reply. 'It will
be some time' the "channel" explained, 'It is the rainy season and the track is very difficult. It will be many days before your letter reaches and the reply comes back.' But being reporters how could we just sit around?

We drove on the Mae Sariang-Mae Samlaep road for nearly half a day in a four-wheel drive vehicle, covering a distance of only fifty kilometres. In unceasing rain we drove to the Karen base of Manerplow. This is the largest base of the Karen National Union and is strategically situated among overlapping mountain ranges and adjacent to the Moei river. During the fighting last summer the Burmese army had attempted to take Manerplow, but it had proved beyond their capability. They had only been able to burn down the market at Mae Samlaeb, the site of a blackmarket through which arms flowed to the Karen. In addition they bombed U Thu Tha, one of the camps of Burmese students who had fled to join the KNU. Some said the bombing had included Manerplow. Nevertheless, now, Manerplow had become the meeting place of the forces opposing the Rangoon government which had formed themselves into the Democratic Alliance of Burma - bringing together twenty-two groups as well as the Burmese students under the organization of the ABSDF (All-Burma Students Democratic Front).

This journey was very different from the previous time we had come here. On this journey the waters of the Salween and Moei were turgid and muddy, overflowing their banks. The roads seemed in an unusable condition, though they were still being used. The last time we came about April, the Karen were engaged in war with the Burmese. But now it was the rainy season and the war had come to an abrupt end. On the mountains clouds heavy with rain hung everywhere. What was important however, was that on this trip we met General Bo Mya, the President of Kawthoolei State.

More than that, we also saw that the logging being done by companies from Thailand were also about to suddenly come to a complete halt because the country was full of mud which made it extremely difficult to move the timber.

The main occurrence we waited for, and puzzling question, was, however, whether the government of General Saw Maung was going to hand over power to the National League for Democracy of Aung San Suu Kyi.

As for the DAB, of which general Bo Mya is the leader, it too did not remain quiet. At the last joint meeting they expressed the opinion that the government of Saw Maung should hand power over to the NLD immediately; otherwise they would increase both internal and external pressure (on the government). The pressure they would exert included the formation of a Provisional Government and the proclamation of the constitution of the DAB by all the leaders of Manerplow, both Saw Ba Thin, the Prime Minister of Kawthoolei and General Bo Mya were in agreement on this issue.

'At the moment Rangoon is in a state as if bereft of all government' said Dr. Tucha Manam, the Deputy Secretary of the DAB explaining the present situation. He further claimed that the government of Saw Maung had lost all legitimacy in the eyes of the people. In the recent election, even in military areas, voting had overwhelmingly been in favour of the NLD. The military government had now been rejected by all sections and on the other side, the party of Aung San Suu Kyi, which had received a mandate to govern from the people was completely powerless because the military government was
not willing hand over power. It was therefore appropriate and timely that the DAB should announce the formation of a temporary government to fill the gap.

'Two or three days there will be a demonstration in Rangoon' Dr. Tucha said, 'the demonstration will mark the first anniversary of the restriction order on Aung San Suu Kyi, and will call for the lifting of her detention.' However, since then we have not had news of any large demonstration in Rangoon.

On our last night in Manerplow we listened to the announcement by Khin Nyunt, the secretary of the State Legal and Administrative Reform Council on Rangoon Radio and Dr. Tucha translated from the Burmese for us. In this very long announcement, the greater part was devoted to an attack on the foreign media, particularly the BBC and Voice of America. Khin Nyunt indicated that Aung San Suu Kyi would not be released as demanded by the NLD. Listening to him recalled all the dictatorships of Asia; what was said was brutally direct, with none of the characteristics one has become used to from politicians in Thailand.

We, myself and a photographer, stayed in this secure place three nights. On 15 July we returned by boat to Tha Song Yang and were in Mae Sod that evening.

The difficulties of travel, including the rain which fell incessantly for more than ten days, the tiredness, the wet clothes which began to mildew caused great unpleasantness and suffering; and we decided that we would rest, recover and slowly start again. But as soon as we arrived in Mae Sod, we received an answer by telephone from our 'channel' in Mae Hong Sorn, which we had not anticipated. 'The General' had given us the green light to proceed up the mountain.

This news gladdened us at the same time as making our spirits fall. That night we went to bed early as as we had to be ready at dawn to begin our journey to Maehongson. When we arrived in Maehongson we were told that there were two other newspapermen who were to make the journey with us - Khun Jindi Lertcharoenchok of The Nation and Mr. .... The later was much disturbed as to whether he would be allowed to pass the Border Police inspection point and also whether 'The General' would treat him as a friend or not. The result was that only three of us set off on the journey.

The four-wheel drive pick-up belonging to our 'channel' took us as far as Ban Huai Phëng, a village on the road between Maehongson and Amphur Pai. There we tried to hire horses to carry us as well as our gear, but we could get only two horses; so the photographer and I had to walk with our guides from up the mountain. If we had not been ill-informed about the nature of the road ahead we would not have made such a foolish decision.

'If the Border Police at the checkpoint ask you where you are going, say you are going "to bargain about cattle". Don't forget.' This was the whispered instruction from one of the young men leading us, who told us they were soldiers and had fought against the Thai Border Police at Ban Hin Taek many years ago.10 'Bargaining for cattle' was a reference to buying cattle at a big market at Ban Mae Or, on the Burmese side of the border. I learned for the first time, on this journey, that herds of cattle were driven into Thailand in this region, each day up to three or four hundred head. The majority travel over a thousand kilometres from Bangladesh through Taunggyi.
The people of this north central region of Burma come to trade at the village of Ban Mae Or. Some come [from Thailand] through Ban Sam Laep, on the way to the Karen camp, and others through Myawaddy, opposite Amphur Mae Sod. 'The previous Governor of Tak took a fee of 15 baht per head on all passing cattle without having to do anything at all' some of the Thai Jai later told us. But the herds that passed through the territory of Shan State (or Thai Jai) had to pay a fee of up to 500 baht per head on their way to Maehongsorn. These cattle were sent by lorry ('ten-wheelers') to all parts of Thailand. Many cattle died and all were badly affected by the strenuous journey.

Perhaps some of the beef we eat in Bangkok comes all the way from Bangladesh' was what we said to each other as we walked.

We duly repeated what we had been instructed to say when we got to the inspection point on the border and were allowed to pass without any suspicion. Our next destination was Wiangcan or Namon, the next inspection point in this country strange to us.

The path was like a sea of mud which slowly, and then more rapidly, became steeper and steeper. It made us increasingly dispirited and exhausted, and those leading seemed to be hurrying along and then having to wait for us to catch up on the flatter parts. We scrambled along the middle of the path accompanied by the unceasing rain which made the already slippery surface into something like a large basin of water over the entire way. But after three hours we were finally able to crawl to the highest point of the track where we stood together with a large cloud - or perhaps better, enshrouded by clouds.

An example of the difficulty of the track was the incident on our return when the photographer was thrown off his horse, when Khun Jindi's horse tripped in the mud and fell on the track. The mud was up to its nose and we thought it would die choked by the mud. Luckily a tractor came along and helped pull it out. It so happens that the tractor was the only vehicle that used this road.

From the mountain peak we slowly made our way down to the camp of Wiang Can. There we were introduced to Caw Khwan MŸang who had specially come to meet us. It seemed to us that Camp Wiang Can had been informed of our arrival by radio. We ate and rested a while to ease our tiredness before setting out for our next destination - Doi Mai Hung, or Doi Mai Rung in Thai (Mountain of the Rainbow Tree). We set off, again in a four-wheel drive vehicle and were told that 'The General' was awaiting us there.

The hardship continued. The turning and sliding of the vehicle, the steep, towering cliffs stole away any desire to admire the beauty of the countryside. The turning and braking, the uneven bounce of the vehicle forced us to grip tightly, but even so one of the soldiers was thrown out of the back of the vehicle. Luckily his head fell in the mud and he did not go rolling down the hill. In spite of it all we finally reached Doi Mai Hung.

KhÑnsai Caijen aroused much respect in us for his sharpness and cleverness. He was waiting for us at the entrance and led us to his temporary abode. He explained to us that 'The General' was waiting to be interviewed by us inside; that the soldiers' camp was not comfortable and he would be much disturbed by the soldiers there. But we thought there might be some other reason which we could not guess. After a delicious meal we were told we would be able to interview Caw
Khun Sa the next morning. I hurriedly went to bed and slept like the dead till next morning. [End 12(4) 30Aug-5Sept.2533: 27-29).

There is a lot that we can talk about concerning this journey. Though the Thai Jai, the owners of this land, are kin, blood relatives of ours through history, we, the Thai Noi. And though we have house fences in common in the north west, this race, hiding itself in these mighty mountains, seem a mysterious people of a mysterious country, to the Thai. In simple terms, we know about Europe and America many tens of times more than we know about them. More than that, nearly all Thai, though they may recognise the name 'Khun Sa', there are very few who see that there may be a connection between the three terms 'Khun Sa', 'Shan State', and 'Thai Jai'.

Khun Sa, narcotics and the national liberation movement

Khun Sa, also possessing the Chinese name Chan Si Fu, was born on 17 February 1934 in Lasu province of Shan State. One version of his lifestory says that Khun Sa is of Thai Jai ancestry from those who migrated from Nong Sae, also known as Talifu, in the seventh group. This wave of migration took place in the 18th Century and the migrants established themselves as the rulers (caw mYang) of Doi Mor in the district of Hsenwi in Shan state.

Khun Sa's father was Khun Ai who died in 1937 leaving a three year old son with his mother Saeng Sum. When she married Khun Cai, the ruler of MYang Thom, Khun Sa went to live with his paternal grandfather Khun Ji Sai at Doi Mor.

It is difficult to establish when he decided to become involved with the movement for national liberation. All we know is that he grew up during the second world war when the Thai Jai fought against the Japanese under the leadership of the Burmese hero Aung San. After the war, in 1949, the Communist Party under Mao Tsetung defeated the Kuo Mintang in China and forced some of Chiang Kai-shek's troops into northern Burma and Thailand. They forced their way into and seized control of areas of Shan State. This was the second occasion on which the Thai Jai took up arms.

In a short time the nationalist movement of the Thai Jai had faced many enemies, including the Japanese imperialists, the Kuo Mintang as well as fighting their own struggle for independence against Burma. Some say this is the longest continuing war on the continent of Asia - all towards maintaining their own ethnic identity. In 1947, after the end of the war and the defeat of the Japanese, the British, the rulers of Burma, and the Thai Jai acting as leaders of a number of minority groups signed the Treaty of Pang Long (or Pang Luang). The most important clause of that treaty set out an undertaking that within ten years Rangoon would give independence to the Thai Jai and the other minority groups who were their partners. But the leadership in Rangoon broke the treaty after the assassination of Aung San. In 1960, the Thai Jai liberation movement was re-established.

This organization first fought with the KMT and then with the Burmese army. This struggle has continued up to the present.

In 1969 Khun Sa was captured in Taunggyi by officials of the Rangoon regime and was held in solitary confinement in Mandalay. This gave him the time to study the strategy of warfare in Sam Kok as it
applied to the Shan. He was released four years later in exchange for a Russian doctor who had been captured by Caw Fa Lan, commander of Khun Sa's [troops] and held as hostage.

During this period of the independence struggle Khun Sa and his organization acquired a reputation for the smuggling and selling of drugs including smuggling of drugs into the United States of America. On 15 March of this year he was implicated with the smuggling of heroin into the USA during the period September 1986 to February 1988 and was charged on ten counts and the Department of Criminal Justice in the USA issued a warrant for his arrest to face charges, in the same way as was done for General Noriega of Panama.

Is Khun Sa guilty or not? This question should be asked of the drug suppression organizations of Thailand and the USA. But as for Khun Sa, in his interview with Khaw Phiset on 17 July, he agreed that the growing of opium took place and that there were many refineries within the area of his control. He also agreed that his government collected taxes and protection fees from the refineries. But he denied that he was involved in the sale of addictive drugs.

The politics of drugs of addiction

The Thai Jai Revolutionary Council [usually referred to as TRC, Tai Revolutionary Council] has tried, through Khun Sa, to establish a program for the elimination of opium in its territory over the last ten years in conjunction with the USA. It is however difficult to understand why the White House has always been cool about the idea. The plan mentioned is the only strategy available to the TRC in bargaining with the USA. 'The Arabs use oil as an instrument in bargaining with the Americans. As for us Tai, it is lucky we have opium'. Said Colonel KhÝnsai Caijen, adding that the TRC was not afraid of damaging its image by the use of opium as a bargaining counter. He compared this with the Palestine Liberation Organization which had used terrorism to coerce the Americans, but now the image of the PLO was improving. KhÝnsai was the head of the public relations section and very close to Khun Sa. He had recently been appointed head of the nine member committee of the Tai Revolutionary Council replacing Caw Nor Fa who died. The leadership of the Thai Jai believed that the reason the USA was not willing to give financial aid to help replace opium as a cash crop, as it had done in Thailand and other opium-producing countries, was that it wanted to use this as a justification for intrusion into this area and then interfere in the affairs of Shan State and Burma.

'In Thailand they have the justification of Cambodia, in Laos and Vietnam there is the question of prisoners of war missing after being shot down during the Vietnam war - but in Burma they have no other excuse than the opium problem'. KhÝnsai told Khaw Phiset at the Sing Toeng military camp on 18 July.

He gave as an example the occasion when the White House sent Mr. Sussex to see Khun Sa in 1986 to seek confirmation that the TRC would support the policy of the President in suppressing the use of addictive drugs so that this could be announced to the American people at the time that Bush was seeking votes in his bid for the Presidency. At that time Khun Sa put forward a six-year plan for the complete elimination of opium from Shan State. But after his [Sussex] return the White House went completely silent.
Khun Sa referred to this plan once more in his letter to President Bush on 10 May 1990, which was intended to coincide with the visit of the Prime Minister of Thailand, General Chartchai Choonhawan to Washington. But the Prime Minister has returned from Washington and there is still no sign of any reply.

If one examines the details of this letter, it ends with the following statement: 'If you really intend to have me help (in the suppression of narcotics) you could discuss this with Rangoon and concerning the suppression of narcotics in Shan State, I will be glad to take any orders Rangoon may give.' One implication we may draw from this is that TRC understands that one of the reasons the Americans ran cold on the proposal is that Washington may be seen as interfering in the internal affairs of Burma, particularly in the circumstances of Rangoon's engagement in military conflict with minority insurrections. Therefore it seems better that any assistance should be channelled through Rangoon or that Rangoon should be the centre for such an undertaking, as narcotics is a problem that concerns Burma as well.

But a new initiative for Khun Sa may be constrained by the fact that the USA itself may consider its human rights policy more important than its narcotics suppression policy. For Washington to come to an agreement with the government of General Saw Maung, the assassin of students and many other citizens protesting in 1988, would be condemned in the eyes of the world and would appear as the Americans having to eat their own words. As before, both the Americans and the TRC are caught on the horns of a dilemma.

However, the urgent task facing Khun Sa and the movement for the liberation of the Thai Jai still remains, that is, the unification of the nation in their demand for independence. Today, when the political situation in Burma is confused and turgid, the situation of the Thai Jai liberation movement has reached a moment of decision.

The problems of uniting the nation and attaining independence

The Shan State has an extensive territory with the Salween river cutting through it. It is inhabited by a number of groups - the Pa-O, Palong, Lahu, Kokang and Wa for example. After War War II each group set up its own organization to protect its rights. When shortly afterwards, China became communist, some groups were influenced by Marxism and among these groups were the Kokang and Wa.

The Thai Jai, who were the largest in Shan State, divided into a number of conflicting groups. In the last ten years these have emerged as three main groups - the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA) led by Caw Korn Coeng, the Shan United Army (SUA) of Caw Khun Sa and the Shan State Army (SSA) of Caw Cai Lek.

In 1983 Caw Korn Coeng of the SUA poroposed that the three groups should unite and this was partially achieved in 1985 when Khun Sa agreed to join the union. After the union he established a base at the large fortification in the provincial town which had been seized from the KMT. The latter were still a problem at that time because the SSA of Caw Khun Cai [Caw Cai Lek above] one of the signatories to the treaty was also a close ally of the Communist Party of Burma (BCP). This occurred in 1975 when Caw Khun Cai went to China to request aid, but was told that Peking would not support any group other than the BCP otherwise known as the Communist Party (Red Flag). The SSA then went to the BCP to enter into an agreement fulfilling the conditions.
demanded by the Chinese. The BCP demanded three conditions of Caw Khun Cai:
He had to accept
1. that the Thai Jai were part of Burma (contradicting the Treaty of Pang Long)
2. the policy of 'People's Democracy'
3. the leadership of the BCP.
This meant that the SSA was now under the wing of the Communist Party of Burma in exchange for weapons and training for its cadres in Peking. The SSA split into two groups, one of them under Caw Khun Cai Lek stayed with the BCP, while the other under Caw Cam Mai, the Secretary, joined the alliance of Caw Korn Coeng and Khun Sa.

In 1987 the TRC (formed after the union) tried again to persuade Caw Khun Cai Lek's group to join them. They were not successful because the BCP still remained. This situation continued until the next year when the BCP disintegrated and the SSA became a member of the Democratic Association of Burma (DAB), an association of twenty-two different organizations from all over Burma, with General Bo Mya, the President of the Karen State of Kawthoolei, as its leader.

Last year the TRC tried again, sending Caw Kan Ced to negotiate with Caw Kai Fa, the representative of the SSA in Pang Luang [Pang Long] district. Both parties decided that high level talks between them should take place once more. But this news leaked out and elements from Rangoon sent representatives to SỸa Thaen, the Deputy-secretary of the SSA and the commander of their forces, and they succeeded in persuading him to withdraw from Caw Khun Cai's group, and as commander of its forces, took with him most of the armed strength of the group. The SSA, then, also allied itself with the government in Rangoon. These events were a major obstacle in the process of trying to unite the Thai Jai. The TRC had also to struggle against many other obstacles in its search for unity. Their aim to unite their people included the unification of other groups who were not Thai Jai, but at this time there had been at least two freedom movements - the 'Red Wa' and the Kokang who were with the BCP, who then broke away and joined forces with the Rangoon government. Not only that, they then turned their guns on the TRC, for example, the battle for Doi Lang which is still going on between the Red Wa and the TRC.

Nevertheless, in the attempts to create a unified force among the minorities to fight against the Rangoon government, we are likely to see many big changes in the near future.

The Leadership of Shan State
Caw Khun Saeng President,
Tai National Council
Caw Korn Coeng President of the administrative section
Caw Khun Sa Supreme commander of the armed forces
Caw Cam Mai Assistant to the Supreme commander
Caw Kan Ced 2nd assistant to the Supreme Commander
Caw Kor Fa Secretary to the TRC
Interview with Khun Sa

Apichart Suthiwong
Khaw Phiset 30 July - 5 August 1990: 30-37
Translated by Gehan Wijeyewardene

Khun Sa: That you have come to see me today will be of value to the 8 million Thai Jai, as well as to the Burmese, the Thai and all the peoples of the world, including all drug addicts.

I am not an enemy of the Thai, nor do I consider myself an enemy of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) and of the United States of America ... they have never come to meet me, but they go back and write bad things about me as if I were their enemy.

Whatever nation wants freedom and independence, it must have an organization and a leader.

Regarding opium, our citizens grow it so that they may buy rice, clothes and blankets. If the DEA and the CIA want to eliminate it they should come and meet our people, advise and instruct them, open schools to teach them. But up to now I have not heard of the DEA or CIA giving any such instruction.

Since 1977 I have called for help every year to suppress narcotics - why have they not helped me? Is the suppression of narcotics the concern of only the DEA and CIA? Do other organizations have no part or responsibility in this?

Q: You say, Sir, that you have never traded in opium, then why is it then that you have such a bad image so widely publicized?

Khun Sa: First, they behave like that because they do not really want to eliminate narcotics. Second, they want to use narcotics as a tool for their own convenience. Third, they want to reap benefits for themselves, they want to make me a source of wealth for themselves...

Q: Regarding the ten criminal charges made against you by the USA, I would like to hear from you yourself whether you plead guilty to any of them or whether you deny them all.

Khun Sa: I am not guilty in any way of any of the charges. All I have done is collect taxes (on opium). I have never traded [in opium].

Q: Do you deny, Sir, that you have any involvement in the smuggling and trade which has resulted in large seizures of narcotics in Thailand?
Khun Sa: I have no involvement in that.

Q: Then why do you think the USA has acted as it has?

Khun Sa: [He says there are reasons of politics, economics and military demands.]

Q: Please expand on this a little. Your answer is a bit too cryptic to understand.

Khun Sa: First, I would like to explain about the character of the three great powers. Russia, when it helps other countries, sends money and experts in various fields. What about the Chinese? They too truly help. For instance they send rice. But they also come and see how the countries they help use the aid they get. For instance, if they see the people using three blankets [each], they ask why don't you try using only two. That is there nature. As for the USA they never instruct anybody, all they want to do is to be master. Then they introduce a debased culture and destroy the culture of other countries. When they go live in other countries they produce children without fathers - as you see in Thailand. If they do that to us we will be very sorry. (He laughs.)

Q: Are you apprehensive, now the USA has issued a warrant for your arrest, that what happened to General Noriega will happen to you?

Khun Sa: First, the USA is one of the most powerful countries in the world. Second, they use reason. Third, they claim to be democratic. Fourth, they claim to follow the rule of law, law is supreme. If all this is true, it is not appropriate that they should behave in that manner towards me.

…

Q: As we hear you have been down to the cities very often, Maehongsorn, for example, as well as other places. Do you still visit such places?

Khun Sa: since I went down to meet General Bo Mya thirteen years at Patthaya I have not been down since - that was 1977.

Q: We know that you wrote to President Bush before Prime Minister Chartchai visited the USA. What was your intention in writing the letter and have you had any reply?

Khun Sa: I sent the letter and a videotape. I said that I had a six-year plan to help President Bush eliminate narcotics as they have said they wanted to do for the last thirteen years. But since Prime Minister Chartchai returned there has been no reaction whatsoever (laughs). I still have the letter and will make you a copy if you like.16

…

Q: From the figures issued by officials involved with narcotics suppression in the USA and Thailand, it appears that the production of opium in the Golden Triangle this year will increase to over 2,500
I would like to know from which area this increase is coming. In your own area has there been a reduction in the area planted?

Khun Sa: If I were to say that the greatest increase in opium production was in the Kokang area or in the Wa area, this would not be accurate because the Wa and Kokang areas are very small. The area west of the Salween (an area of Shan State not under the control of Khun Sa) is the largest area. This must be the largest production area. But if one averages out, there has been a general increase. Regarding the decrease in production, I help as best I can. When you have finished this interview go and ask the villagers how I help them, how I help them build their houses, how I give them cattle and buffaloes. If I do not help them they plant more opium.

... Q: You have said that you are not involved with the trade in opium except that you tax it within your territory. But it is known that within your territory there are many heroin refineries. If these refineries are not yours whose are they?

Khun Sa: The citizens plant the opium, traders trade in it. These traders do not exist only in my country. Even America has them ...

In 1984 we burned some once. In 1986 we seized narcotics and announced that we would hand it over, but nobody came to receive it. Nobody announced they would give me the right of suppression. If I try suppression by myself and seize [the opium], where am I going to store it? There is no one who will take it off me.

Q: Sir, you have not yet answered the questioned regarding the heroin refineries. We would like to know if they exist, and if so to whom they belong.

Khun Sa: They exist, but I can't tell you (whose they are) because I myself don't know.

Q: Do you think you could suppress the growing of opium yourself once Shan State achieves its independence?

Khun Sa: Yes. If we were to eliminate opium ourselves, we must have independence first. If I achieve the return of our country; and all the territory was ours, we would have the right to negotiate with whatever other nation. In my country there are resources of all kinds, and I would use them all as means of improving our economy.

Q: Last year there was a report from the United States of America that the Rangoon government had been negotiating to enter into a secret treaty of some kind with the Kokang and the Red Wa. In that report your name was not mentioned, though it did say the agreement took place in Shan State. Were you a party to that agreement or not?

Khun Sa: What the Kokang and Red Wa do are the consequences of the state of the Communist Party of Burma (BCP). They fought against their own leadership and then had to join hands with the Burmese government. But in my case there has been no conflict within our own ranks. There is therefore no need for us to enter into discussions with Rangoon.
Q: That means that you deny any agreement with the Rangoon government. Is that so?

Khun Sa: There is none.

Q: They say that the reason Rangoon does not send troops to attack you is because of an agreement you have with them. Is that true or not?

Khun Sa: It is not true. We are in a shooting war with Burma every day.

Q: It is known that not long ago you sent Mr. KhŶnsai (Caijen) to Manerplow camp (Karen headquarters). What was his business there?

Khun Sa: I sent KhŶnsai for one reason only, nothing else, to meet Bo Mya, and some business of his own with Pransoeng (the Kachin leader), not to meet the DAB. There are changed circumstances in Rangoon with the victory of the party of Aung San Šuu Kyi in the elections and we went for consultations, that's all. It had nothing to do with the DAB.

Q: What were the results of these consultations?

Khun Sa: We did not get permission to meet them.

Q: Why?

Khun Sa: They claimed that I had joined the Burmese side.

Q: And that was not true?

Khun Sa: True or not, that depends. You find out yourself (laughs). I could say anything.

Q: If the NLD of Aung San Suu Kyi were to be given power and established as the government and if she wanted the minorities to enter the Union of Burma once more, will Shan State enter or would you insist on separation and independence?

Khun Sa: A politician must do whatever is best for the country. However, if I were to join hands with Burma, I think the people that would be most sorry and lose most would be Thailand.

Q: I would like a straight answer - if there were discussions would you join them or not?

Khun Sa: We agreed to the treaty of Pang Luang [Pang Long] and this was broken by Burma. Therefore we must have a new treaty of Pang Luang.

Q: It appears that you will join the discussions if Rangoon announces them.

Khun Sa: [I will] join.
Q: I would like you to analyze the political situation in Burma back to 1947 and the Treaty of Pang Luang and to the time of Ne Win and then to the changed situation in 1988, together with your predictions for the future.

Khun Sa: In the situation I am in I read and I listen everyday. As for the future I would like to say that our children live in a tiger's cave. We must help them to emerge, and for this we must clear a path for them. I cannot say what techniques we will have to use to clear such a path. This is the condition that politics has come to. We have said the tiger will bite us, we cannot help our children, the tiger will bite us too (laughs).

Q: If we divide the powers in Burma into three - the DAB led by the Karen, the Rangoon government and yourself and if you were engaged in talks [ with the others] would you talk straight with Rangoon or would you join with the DAB and talk secretly with them. What would you choose?

Khun Sa: In my opinion, we have the Pang Luang agreement with Burma, our steps must follow that treaty. We do not need to join hands with anybody, and we do not need a new agreement. But because you have asked about these matters I would like to say a little more.

In today's Union of Burma the rangoon government is socialist, and there is another resistance group which is also socialist - the Red Flag Communist party with Thakin Tan Tun as its leader and getting support from Red China. The White Flag Communist Party of Thakin Soe gets support from Russia. But these two parties cannot defeat Rangoon, even though they are being supported by great powers. More than that, these Communist Parties bring danger to us. For example they use the Kokang and Wa as their instruments. Since the dissolution of the Communist Party, they still continue as our enemies.

It now happens that the Government of Burma wants to divide the country into nine states, where there now are seven. The two extra states being Kokang and Wa; that is, they are proposing to divide our territory. I began the struggle for independence in 1969 and was based on the Thai border. This border area progressed, why? Because citizens fleeing socialism and communism came and joined us on the border and the communities grew. I too played a part in this development, until now our organization does not get any outside aid from anybody. The government (Thai) does not need to support us, except that they should leave us a little freedom to pursue our struggle, and we will triumph. We too live under the protection of the monarchy, we are not enemies of the Thai. But at the moment I am constrained on all sides - one foot and one arm are held by the DEA, which makes it impossible for me to do anything. At present the Thai Government, not only does it not give us any help, it causes us great difficulty.

Since the end of last month we are at war with the Red Wa. Everyone knows the BCP (The Communist Party of Burma) has disintegrated, but I say they still exist. They have escaped to Red China. If the BCP were to return and assume a new role in Burma, the Kokang and the Wa would join them. If that happens, would not Thailand with its institutions of monarchy and democracy be in danger? I would like to ask you that?
While we and the Wa are shooting each other, which side will the Thai choose? In fact [Thailand] could just keep quiet, but now they are aiding the Wa, aiding the communists, they have taken our base (at Doi Lang) and handed it to the Wa. Is that good or not? I say that the present leaders of Thailand are not helping the Thai, but they help ASEAN, work for China, work for America (laughs). Is that not so? They are the clients of America (laughs) come and oppress the Thai. Why do you have leaders like this?

Q: How far have your attempts to create a single union in Shan state succeeded, particularly in bringing together the SSPP (the Shan State Peoples Party led by Khun Cai Lek), the Kokang and Red Wa?

Khun Sa: I try every possible way to bring unity. Though we are engaged in a shooting war with the Red Wa, I do not consider them enemies. I myself am on the calmer side, not the more aggressive side, and believe that their leader (Caw Ji Lai) who fights with me will not have a long life. When a new leader is installed they are likely to change their policy. Another thing, those who fight us are from the same village as we are. Those from our village, good or bad, are still our people.

Q: How far has unity with the SSPP progressed?

Khun Sa: Good. We help each other. Their people have come to live with us. SSPP members at Ban Nong Taw were attacked and taken away by the Wa. We have helped them and they have now all escaped.

Q: But the SSPP still has the problem that they are members of the DAB. If there is to be real unity with the SSPP, should they not resign from the DAB?

Khun Sa: Did you not hear? Because the SSPP has joined us, they have left the DAB.

Q: I gather that General Bo Mya does not like you. Have you had any conflict with him in the past?

Khun Sa: I have nothing against Bo Mya. I have met him many times and I have always been the host. He has never entertained me (laughs). We have had no disagreements. Two or three years ago he came to visit me and I arranged a military parade to greet him.

Q: Mr. Khânsai says that it is not necessary for Shan State to insist on independence if Rangoon agrees to acceptable conditions. I would like to ask what conditions the TRC (Tai Revolutionary Council) wants.

Khun Sa: I have my own ideas about this. On my side we consider everything. It is not as if, if one thing does not happen, we cannot do anything. If we think like that, nothing will be concluded. Everything must be flexible if anything is to be completed. It depends on the good of the nation. We have learned lessons from the last time. Let it not happen like that the next time. Last time there was no justice, Burma was the aggressor, and many times took everything away.
Do not say we now have enough to live our lives, we do not even have a place to stand. Because of that we must work to free our land.

Q: You have now been fighting for the independence of Shan State for twenty years, how long more do you think you must fight before you succeed?

Khun Sa: If it is not done in our time, our children and grandchildren must continue fighting. As I have come to this point, those who were weak have become as the strong, and those who were poor have become men of some substance. Our task is a noble task. If we are to continue there must be those who come to help us. Our doing it ourselves is not the same as others helping us. Others helping us is not the same as the spirits and the gods helping us. The gods helping us is not the same as circumstances helping us. We have struggled for twenty years, if we cannot last another two months that would be a tragedy (laughs).

Q: When you consider the policy of 'turning battlefields in market places' of the government of General Chartchai Choonhavan, what are your thoughts?

Khun Sa: It's great. I like it very much. But its virtue is in the speaking, in practice it is no good at all.

Q: Do you know about the attempts of General Chawalit (Yongjaiyudh) and General Pat (Akhnibudr) to be the midlemen for talks between the DAB and the government of General Saw Maung? If so, how do you see the role of the Thai army in this matter?

Khun Sa: In the same way I see the involvement of the Thai army and Thai politicians with the government of Burma. They have been able to steal large quantities of Burma's timber. At the same time what Burma has got out of it is monosodium glutamate powder and rubber thongs (laughs).

* * *

News and correspondence

Dehong

Acharn Thawi Swangpanyangkun (Masters degree program, Department of Thai, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002) writes

To Dr. Gehan Wijeyewardene ...

'In your article 'The little world of Dehong' published in the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter No. 9, June 1990, p. 11 you write, there is not a great deal available on the Dehong language to those who do not read Chinese. Professor Wu Lingyun has published in Chinese and he has a paper in the Proceedings of the Kunming conference. The most accessible work is a recent work in Thai by Thawi Swangpanyangkun, with the English title Dehong Dai First Reader. Thawi
does not appear to be correct in interpreting Dehong as meaning 'south of the Salween'. Tai Khorn or Tai Khwan is probably more correct.

First let me take the opportunity to thank you for the continuing gift of your Newsletter. I regret that we did not have the chance of meeting when you were last in Chiangmai. Nevertheless, let me express my appreciation for this publication which is an excellent, central source of world-wide information on research concerning Tai and Thai peoples.

My interpretation of the term 'Dehong Tai' as 'Tai south of the Salween' (tai ต่อõi khong) has the following reasons.

1. This is information given me by Tai from MŸang Khorn (Mangshi) who have come to reside in Chiangmai, and particularly by my teacher, Khru Saeng Caroenporn, who participated with me in the preparation of Dehong Tai First Reader (which I have presented to you). Khru Saeng quite clearly pronounces the Tai words as taŸ 31-kho»5322. The only possible meaning for taŸ 31 is 'south'. The word tai meaning Tai (people) is pronounced in MŸang Khorn the same as in Thai [with a mid tone], As for the word khong, Tai Jai, Tai Yuan, Tai LŸ and Lao all use it to refer to the Salween River in Burma.

Khun Lawsaeng, teacher of Tai from MŸang HŸm (north of MŸang Khorn) who came to study Thai at Chulalongkorn University last year, also referred to it as 'T‰i Khong'. Khun Lawsaeng kindly proofread the text book I prepared and corrected two or three items, but made no change to the words 'T‰i Khong'.

2. I began studying the various Tai languages after many other scholars including those mentioned above. Many scholars have been to MŸang Khorn and MŸang Mao, for example Dr. Banchop Bandhumedha who accompanied H.R.H. Princess Galyani Vadhana on her visit to Sipsongpanna and Dehong. In the volume Yunnan edited by H.R.H. Dr. Banchop writes (p. 204 l. 3)

The word 'Dehong' is the Chinese name. The Tai call it 't‰Ø kh—»' (= T‰i khong) which means 'south of the Salween River' (kho» is the name the Tai give to the Salween). . .

If I understand you correctly, you suggest that my interpretation of 'Tai south of the Salween' is incorrect, and that it should be interpreted as 'Tai Khorn' or Tai Khwan'. I request some time to discuss and investigate your interpretation.

I have requested Acharn Sujit Wongthes, the editor of Silpawatthanatham to publish my explanation of the name Dehong so readers of that journal, many of whom are well-informed about Tai peoples, may present their views, help to elucidate this question and advance our knowledge of Tai studies in general. I hope you will have no objection.

Trans. from Thai by Gehan Wijeyewardene

[Gehan Wijeyewardene writes,

I am happy Acharn Thawi has raised this question and certainly have no objection to its being raised in Silpawatthanatham. There is a clear
difference of opinion. Informants were quite clear that the name of the mŸang was 'kh'n' (khorn) or 'khuan' (khwan). This vowel sound and diphthong appear to be allophonic in the language. The word, meaning 'cock crow', fits into a whole pattern of mŸang names which refer to the time of day at which the Buddha is said to have visited. In Dehong A.P. other examples are MŸang Mao (the stillness of dawn) and Wanding (noon).

I am also puzzled that the mŸang in question should be considered 'south of the Salween'. The map would suggest it should be thought of as 'west', or perhaps 'north'. Of course, it might mean 'under' in the sense of 'dominated by', rather than 'south'. But MŸang Khorn is quite far from the Salween as it runs through Yunnan and is in no sense dominated by it..

Regarding Dehong, we have heard from Kunming that it is now an 'open region' and foreigners may travel freely, including the areas of Wanding and Ruili (on the Burmese border).

Tai Wells
Dr. Julie D. Forbush of the University of Washington Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies (mail address: 919 109th Ave. NE #601, Bellevue, WA 98004-4404, USA) writes in connection with the articles by Wang Guaxiang on 'The wells of Tai villages', and would like to know if there are other wells in Lan Na like that in the photograph, near Wat Pha Lat, on the slopes of Doi Suthep, Chiang Mai. She writes,
indication of a path from the Doi Suthep peak to the lowlands. The moss-coated chedi has many Burmese/Shan details. In the well-house the semi-circular arch and the pilasters are on the order of many Mandalay-type additions bestowed upon Chiang Mai wiharns by the Shan teak-workers of the 1880-1920 era. This well-cover could be no more than 100 years old. It rouses interest because it is the only such cover I saw in studying and photographing more than 360 wats in Lan Na. Is covering-a-well a Shan custom, perhaps among the eastern or "Chinese Shans", a custom held in common with Yunnan? How consistent was trade with Yunnan? Certainly routes from Yunnan to the Ping valley have been known since the Phi Ta YYN descended to harrass Chet Lin/Jethapuri, and perhaps even before, when Suvanna Kham Deng's men discovered that immortal, ubiquitous sage Vasudeva living at Pha Lat.

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Book news
Contributions ` l'Žtude d'un cycle des lŽgendes lau. par Charles Archaimbault, Paris, 1980
Le Ramker ou l'amour symbolique de Ram et Seta, par Franois Bizot. Chiang Mai, 1989
In Arts Asiaticques Tome XLIV, 1989
* 

The first printed example of the Lanna font for Macintosh on a laser. Those responsible for this program are:
1. Professor Udom Runruangsri, editor of the Lanna - Thai Dictionary.
2.ÊAcharn Thawi Swangpanyangkoon, the composer of the Lanna inscription on the pedestal of the Three Kings monument in Chiangmai.
The font was devised for the publication of the Lanna - Thai Dictionary (Edition of the Queen Mother) and to foster knowledge of the Lanna language.
(Copyright in the font is reserved)
These are creations of the Department of Education, Employment and Training. Ed.

Based on a presentation given to the Thai Studies Group, ANU on 14 June, 1990. Professor Genest (Department of Anthropology, Université Laval, Québec, Canada G1K 7P4) was a visiting fellow in the Department of Anthropology, associated with the Thai-Yunnan Project.

Pinyin spelling is used where appropriate.

Ne Win was not leader, Aung San was. Ne Win was a sergeant at the time, one of the 'thirty comrades'. We are grateful to Elizabeth Lawrence, for help with this and the following translations.

The Chinese text says he is called Tin Oo Junior to distinguish him from General Tin U, now one of the dissidents who used to be the Minister for Defence. Colonel Tin U was expelled from the army in 1976.

This is the Pinyin representation of the Chinese. Below, the romanization of the Thai is 'Kokang'. Bertil Lintner writes 'Kokang Chinese' (Outrage London and Bangkok: White Lotus 1990: 202). The linguistic affiliations of this group are uncertain. They may be related, linguistically to the Akha.

This figure includes both the official and non-official transactions. The official figure is 0.8 billion. The trade volume of 1989 increased by 86.3% over that of 1988.

She once said: 'Buddha used to be a common person. He achieved his goal through his own effort. He should not be deified by our religion. Buddhists account for 87% of Burma's population. They can achieve their goals through their own efforts as well'. Her speech was quoted out of context by the Army as: 'Buddha used to be a common person. He should not be deified by our religion.'

Reference to the 'Shan' or Tai-speakers of Burma is as confused in Thai as it is in English. The British referred to all Tai-speakers with whom they came in contact, who were not 'Siamese', as 'Shan' from a Burmese term cognate with 'Siam'. The Thai continue to use this word with the pronunciation Ch<aan. The term Thai jai, meaning 'Greater Thai' is historically used of the speakers of the linked languages 'Shan' and 'Ahom', and presumably refers to a tradition of earlier migration. There is rather a confused writing of the word now spelled in English as 'Tai', sometimes with an aspirated initial consonant, but apparently always pronounced unaspirated. All these usages are present in this article. The translation will not use the spelling 'Thai' to refer to the people of Shan State, except when the phrase 'Thai jai' is in the original.

Ban Hin Taek, then headquarters of Khun Sa, was stormed and taken by Thai forces in 1981 (ed.).

Luang in Thai becomes long in many Tai languages. The Burmese write the name 'Pinlon'.

The Thai says 'Bush', a mistake.

See note 6, above.

For a translation of a previous account of these events see Number 8: 14-15.

Some small sections of the interview have been omitted.

A Thai version of the letter accompanies the article and interview in Khaw Phiset.

It is not clear if metric tonnes are intended.

Thakin Soe died in May 1989. Lintner (op. cit. 189) says he was
leader of the Red Flag.

19 Phra boroma maha bothi sompara.

20 The context does not make it clear, in this section, whether Khun Sa means 'Thai' or 'Tai' or both. The text has 'Thai' throughout. One imagines this ambiguity was deliberately there in the interview.

21 This is ambiguous.

22 Acharn Thawi uses the symbol  where we use Ÿ. The 'aŶ' represents the 'mai muan' @ which in some Tai languages is a diphthong ending with the high central vowel. The figures are a means of indicating tones on a five level grid - 1 to 5, low to high.

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end of file