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This large hand-coloured map may be ordered from Burma Rights Movement for Action, PO Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504. Please include a generous donation to cover their costs.

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More on Thai borders

Gehan Wijeyewardene

In previous issues of the Newsletter (7:1-2) I drew attention to Thai border policy as it was represented in the manner in which Mae Salong (now officially Ban Santakhiri), the headquarters of one faction of the Kuomintang, and Hin Taek (now officially, Thoed Thai), the former headquarters of Khun Sa, were being assimilated into the greater Thai polity and society. The Thai-Burma border is a mosaic, or perhaps a string of beads of different shapes and sizes, each one of which possesses its own distinct, and sometimes unique characteristics. This brief paper will look at a few of these, again mainly from a point of view on the Thai side of the border, with the overall assumption that, generally, the Thai establishment has a pretty good idea of what its border policy has been over the years and with the ultimate aim, as previously discussed in relation to Mae Salong and Hin Taek, of securing internationally recognized frontiers and extending to them the political and cultural writ of Bangkok.

The discussion itself must fall between two major boundary markers: a theory of borders or frontiers and the contemporary political reality of the civil war in Burma and Thailand's (and to a lesser extent the international community's) involvement with it. Let me begin by summarizing earlier comments on Mae Salong and Hin Taek. The rapprochement of the Thai government with the Kuomintang was largely the work of General Kriangsak, begun while he was still in the army, and completed as Prime Minister. The situation as reported on in 1989 was that internal order was in the hands of the Kuomintang's own conscript force, but the community had accepted the establishment of a Thai school for their children and the Queen Mother had completed the formal recognition of a Thai wat. Mae Salong is also being promoted as a prime tourist resort and is accessible by 'paved provincial highway'.

Hin Taek was attacked and taken by the Thai Army in 1982. It is still only barely accessible by road and appears to enjoy considerable autonomy. Internal order is in the hands of a locally recruited 'volunteer' force and administration is by a headman who was also headman during the Khun Sa period. There is a Thai Border Police primary school.
The major point made was to draw attention to the differing strategies employed by the Thai in pursuing their border policy. In the rest of this paper I shall briefly discuss other examples of border strategy and finally discuss some implications of the current political relations with Burma and the continuing insurgency in the latter country. The area of the border covered is quite extensive stretching from Mae Sai (Chiang Rai province, see Newsletter 8: 1-3) in the north and down the west to Mae Sam Laep (Amphur Mae Sariang, Mae Hong Sorn Province).

The first location we may consider is Doi Ang Khang, the site of a major Royal Project in Amphur Fang, investigating the feasibility of a variety of replacement crops for opium. It is an impressive research station and it is very likely that some success has been achieved (my visit to Ang Khang goes back some years now). This is an area occupied by various Lahu groups (known to the Thai as Musser) who used to grow opium extensively. As in many such projects the people whose crops are intended to be replaced are now mainly employed as casual labour. It would also appear that were any experimental crop to succeed, the Lahu would not be in a position to exploit it commercially. Capital, organizational and business know-how would be indispensable requirements and these are likely to come from Thai and Chinese entrepreneurs based in Chiangmai and Bangkok. In the light of more recent experience, I would however say that Ang Khang fits a pattern of Thai occupation of the frontier. A highly skilled scientific and administrative contingent allows the growth of a community and encourages tourism to what must be one of the most beautiful places in Thailand. Ang Khang was one of the areas in which camps were established by the Kuo Min Tang under the command of General Li Wen Huang (see Apichart Suthiwong Newsletter 14:5).

Further south in Chiang Dao district is the valley of Kae Noi (older maps write it Kaen Noi, in Thai) which was apparently General Li's headquarters at various times. The area has become important recently as it gives access to one of the timber concessions in Burma in the vicinity of Mae Nam Haeng. The roads however remain extremely difficult and the prospect of tourism has not, it seems, been raised. The Thai presence in Kae Noi is Border Police, who not only run the primary school, which has seven teachers, but also mans an armed emplacement on the road out of the valley. Like Hin Taek there is extensive irrigated agriculture. The location is important to the Thai as the region on the Burmese side is contested territory by Wa and Khun Sa's Tai. There are unsubstantiated stories that both sides raid into Thai territory.

The school, the head teacher says, is run without a regular allocation and has been built with the labour of teachers, pupils and volunteers. One toilet unit is a Canadian gift. Like Mae Salong the Chinese have largely consented to let their children be educated in Thai, but they do conduct Chinese classes in the evenings. The school is part of a project under the patronage of the Princess (Phra Thep) which aims to provide free midday meals to pupils.

The valley contains about 500 houses, but only 106 persons are registered Thai citizens. Unofficially there are six Chinese villages, four Lahu and one Tai Jai (Shan). Each village has its headman, but only one, a Lahu, is recognized by government as official headman for the valley, because of the small population which is officially Thai. There is a Chinese church and a Tai Jai wat established about four years ago.
It was not possible to get a clear picture of the Chinese soldiery. There is a section of the valley which is quite clearly spoken of as khet thaharn 'the soldiers' area', but the head teacher insisted that all they were were work groups, such as, for instance, running the power plant. Work groups were also engaged in repairing roads.

Kae Noi when compared with Mae Salong and Hin Taek show differing patterns of integration, but on what appears to be a consistent plan.

Almost on the same latitude as Kae Noi is the cattle market of Ban Huai Phng and the Veterinary Station of Ban Rong Haeng. These lie in Mae Hong Sorn Province, about 50 kilometres north of the provincial capital. The cattle trade through and from Burma into Thailand is a subject that merits much closer attention than it seems to have had so far. There are claims that most of the cattle come from Bangladesh, but there are also claims that some animals have walked right across the sub-continent from Pakistan. They certainly come from Burma into Thailand and use many routes, but early this year the Huai Phng-Rong Haeng route was the major one into north Thailand, the others being impeded by the exigencies of the war. Rong Haeng is the juncture of two separate routes for cattle and is also the point from which entry is made into the territory of Khun Sa. He is supplied regularly from Mae Hong Sorn by private utilities, though at the time of our visit the police and military check-points were closed, the locals said, for the first time. This road is also a major conduit for timber from Burma.

The small staff at the Veterinary Station is headed by a young Tai Jai officer from Mae Hong Sorn. Ostensibly his only interest is the prevention of diseased animals entering the country. In pursuit of this aim he has established contacts with Khun Sa a large photograph with the two of them has pride of place in his office and has received permission to establish observation and vaccination posts in Khun Sa's territory. Cattle are examined and vaccinated at these posts before they are allowed into Rong Haeng and quarantined. This procedure apparently allows for a much shorter quarantine period. Politically, whether intended or not, this is yet another means by which the Thai presence is officially established on a difficult border and an insurrectionary authority unofficially recognized in a neighbouring state.

About 80 kilometres south of Mae Hong Sorn city is the district town of Khun Yuam1 and in the mountains to the northwest is the Karen village of Hua Ngaw (now officially known as Mang Ngaw). The headman of this village is an impressive man in his forties who has decided that his people belong within the orbit of Thai culture and polity, while retaining their Karen-ness as much as possible. The village is almost entirely Buddhist, in fact on the day of our visit the funeral rites were being conducted for the last woman to practise sacrificial rituals in the performance of the traditional 'au' ma xae2. There are Karen monks in residence at the local wat, but the Tai Jai abbott was also attending from a nearby Shan village. The local school was in the process of being transferred from Border Police control to the relevant department in the Ministry of Education one more step in the process of absorption. The headman appears to run a successful trading enterprise with Tai Jai from across the border, some of them travelling four days to buy the goods he has on offer, mostly clothes, blankets and bedding, but also some electronic gear.

One very revealing comment he made was, when asked as to why there was an
obvious hor sa ban (village spirit shrine) in the village, he replied that he thought the Karen should adopt the practices of the main component of the population, the Khon Mang.

In the current political situation the most important location on the Thai-Burmese border is Manerplaw: the headquarters of the Karen resistance, and the headquarters of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma. At the time of writing the fate of Manerplaw is uncertain. The strategic mountain, Thi Pa Wa Kyu, has fallen to the Burmese and some news suggests that the settlement of Manerplaw itself is now deserted. I have, however, a communication from Manerplaw dated 27 March with the gleeful comment we wrecked khin nyunt's party. The note says 'The fighting has been surprisingly quiet from Manerplaw. But things are heating up on the diplomatic front'.

This paper however, is primarily concerned with Thai border policy and practice, and this may be discussed irrespective of the fate of Manerplaw. Mae Sam Laep a small crowded market town, at least twice reconstructed after Burmese shelling, is the northern Thai gateway to Manerplaw. The long-tailed boats that ply between Mae Sam Laep, Manerplaw and Thai jetties to the south are, it seems mostly Karen owned. Many of them are part of the remuneration package given to the leadership, so that though they ply for fare, their main purpose is to provide official travel facilities when required. Manerplaw residents are not charged, but others must pay either a fare or a charter fee. The fact that many of the boats fly Thai flags is a matter of no great consequence. The recent Burmese offensive has greatly increased the number of Karen and other Burmese refugees on the Thai side of the border. Officially, the Thai do not concede there is a refugee problem and the UNHCR cannot act. The problems are becoming quite horrendous, and it is only the fact that a volunteer network exists, created to deal with the refugees on the Cambodian border, that has prevented the situation from becoming immeasurably worse.

However, long before the current offensive, there have been refugee camps on the Thai border, and what is more combatants and officials of the resistance have been allowed to live in Thai territory. Clearly the Thai have allowed this for humanitarian reasons and through antipathy for the disgusting behaviour of SLORC. But the Thai government has (or had) close connections with SLORC, and one cannot but presume that there are substantial strategic reasons for them to wish the continuance of the conflict in Burma. Timber and other concessions, with much involvement of the military, past and present, has much to do with this policy, but it would be wrong to think commercial gain is the only reason. When the conflicts of mainland Southeast Asia are finally settled, the two powers that will emerge, Vietnam and Burma, may find their economies and their societies in thrall to the Thai. It may also be mentioned that though the Thai military had been one of the major obstacles to a peace agreement in Cambodia, they were also the first to act when the accord was signed. Thai mine-clearing units were already operating while the UN was still dithering and the Thai are well on their way to establishing, or re-establishing old rail links. The evidence presented here is very brief, but helps, I think, towards establishing the nature of Thai border policy and practice.

* * *

Lao Refugees in China: A Postscript

Scott Bamber
In an editorial published in the June 1991 issue of the Newsletter (Number 13) attention was drawn to the plight of a group of Lao refugees whom the Editor met whilst conducting research in Meng La County in Xishuangbanna. These people had experienced severe difficulties in adjustment, mainly due to language problems and a lack of land, and they wanted to get out of China, even to return to the P.D.R. Lao. Since the publication of the editorial, further information has been received from the Beijing office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on Lao refugees in China which merits a postscript to the earlier story. The placement of Lao refugees in China dates back to a Chinese government scheme started in 1979 whereby an offer was made to accept 10,000 Southeast Asian refugees for resettlement. Altogether China accepted 2,700 Laotian refugees, mainly ethnic Lao from southern Laos, who were resettled between 1980-82 from camps in Thailand, where they had spent an average of 3-5 years. They arrived in China in two groups: the first group of 1,100 people came in early 1980 and were settled on Hainan Island, however, due to difficulties in adapting, they were subsequently relocated to Xishuangbanna in July-August 1980. Meanwhile a second group of 1,419 refugees arrived in February 1980 and were settled directly in Xishuangbanna. Apparently it was thought that the similarities in language and culture between the Lao and the Dai (Tai Lue) would make settlement easier. The refugees were housed on state farms in Meng La County, and financial support was provided by UNHCR and the Chinese government to cover expenses, including housing, medical care and education.

In addition to these main groups, a number of smaller groups of refugees arrived in China during 1981-82, including people of Chinese Lao and Mien ethnicity. Some of these people were settled in other provinces. There were also several groups of Lao migrants, numbering around 1,250 people in all, who crossed directly into China during 1980, and 1982-83 from Phong Saly. These were settled in various communes around Yunnan.

According to UNHCR figures, obtained from local Chinese authorities, in June 1991 the total Lao population in China was 4,492 people. These were distributed as follows:

Yunnan Province
  Mengla Farm (Meng La)  947
  Mengpeng Farm (Meng Phong)  624
  Mengman Farm (Meng Mang)  960
  Mengxing Farm (Meng Sing)  489
  Scattered villages  1,437
Guangdong Province
  Tonghu farm  9
Guangxi Province
  Chijiang, Beihai  1
  Pingxiang County  1
Hainan Province
  Wenchang County  5
Jiangxi Province
  Oushan Farm  18
  Xiugu Farm  1

Total  4,492
Despite the perceived suitability of Xishuangbanna for resettlement of Lao refugees, there have long been problems of adaptation. 'Spontaneous movements' of Lao refugees out of China were reported as far back as 1983-84 when a group of 375 people attempted to reach Thailand via Burma. Some of these were later 'voluntarily' returned to China from a refugee camp in Thailand. UNHCR subsequently allocated additional funding for vocational training, animal husbandry, land reclamation and housing as an attempt to promote integration. However further movements out of China occurred, in this case to the Lao province of Luang Namtha, up until early 1991.

For reasons which are unclear, a decision was made around between 1990 and early 1991 to organise the voluntary repatriation of Lao refugees in Xishuangbanna. This resulted in the Chinese/Lao/UNHCR Tripartite Meeting on Voluntary Repatriation to Laos, held in Kunming in July 1991. As a result of this meeting, a UHNCR-funded project for the voluntary repatriation of Lao from China was initiated. Around 400 Lao were returned to Laos in 1991, and it is hoped that by the end of 1992 a total of around 2,000 people will have been repatriated. UNHCR is closely involved in monitoring the 'voluntariness and the safety and dignity of the return'.

From information provided by UNHCR, it is clear that not all Lao refugees in China want to return to Laos. There are obvious reasons why those who fear criminal prosecutions might be reluctant to return, however there is reason to believe that many of those who stated that they did not want to return will change their minds, once they become convinced that there will be no adverse repercussions. For others, the decision not to return may be based on more complex reasons. For example during the Editor's stay in Xishuangbanna he made contact with a number of Lao refugees who had married into Tai Lue families, some in fairly remote villages. One man was living in a village near Meng Lun, and his parents and other family members were settled at Meng Man. For such people who have established more permanent links, the decision whether or not to return to Laos will be a difficult one. As a whole, the case of the resettlement of Lao refugees in China is illustrative of the problems inherent in some of the assumptions, held by both individuals and officials, regarding ethnic groups in this part of the world. The initial question which arises must surely be why anyone in their right mind who had reason to flee Laos would want to seek refuge in China. The decision to go to China may exemplify the levels of desperation which are reached after three or more years in a refugee camp, or it may reflect on the image of itself which China has managed to promote in Asia in recent years. There is certainly a perception among many Northeastern Thais that China is technologically very advanced, an image which was clearly seen in the hard-sell job done on the 1990 Asian Games. It comes as something of a shock for many Thais visiting the Southwestern regions of China to find conditions of rural poverty which are often far worse than those in the Northeast of Thailand. This may fit with one of the reasons given by UNHCR for the difficulties faced by Lao refugees in resettlement, which was that many of them came from urban rather than rural backgrounds. Nevertheless it is still hard to imagine that people who were obviously disillusioned with Lao socialism could hold any illusions about life in communist China.

In regard to officials' perceptions of what constitutes appropriate resettlement, there would also appear to be certain misapprehensions. It is apparent from the experience of the Lao refugees in China that it is not enough
to provide conditions which are similar in terms of climate (Hainan Island), or even where there are already people of similar ethnic background (Xishuangbanna). Some of the reasons for the Lao refugees' dissatisfaction with China were outlined in the earlier Editorial on the subject (June 1991). In the main these focussed on the position of low esteem in which the Tai Lue have traditionally held the Lao, the restrictive Chinese political system, and the settlement of the refugees on state farms.

The first two of these points were described in the earlier article, however the last point bears some brief comment here. In order to appreciate the significance of being placed on state farms, it is important to understand that there is a widespread resentment among Tai Lue and other local peoples regarding the presence of the farms in the region. The reason for the resentment stems from the fact that the revenue from the farms, which mainly produce rubber, goes directly to the provincial government, bypassing local government. The employees on the farms are also mainly migrants from other areas of China, in particular Sichuan. The use of the farms as a settlement site for Lao refugees thus introduced a further complication into a situation which was already problematic.

In cases such as this, where international diplomacy is concerned, it is very easy to look for scapegoats and in these circumstances 'ethnicity' may provide a convenient face-saver for all concerned. However as can be seen from the information presented here, it would be inaccurate to say that the reason the Lao refugees have not been able to adjust to life in China is due to ethnic differences. It is true that the small number of non-ethnic Lao refugees have apparently had few problems in settlement. Then again, little is known of the attitude of the two thousand-odd Lao refugees who entered China outside the programme, or who did not settle on state farms. While ethnicity was an important factor, it seems more likely that the main reasons for difficulty in settlement were related to the internal political situation within China, and the expectations and social backgrounds of the refugees themselves. Given China's dubious record in relation to all these areas, questions should be asked about the wisdom of the international community in allowing refugees to be resettled there in the first place.

***

Epitaph for a dead porter in the Salween

Tall green trees, wide implacable water,
Deeply etched, sharp boulders;
A fitting tomb for any man.

What manner of men must wrench you from your life,
Treat you as even the vilest would not treat a beast of burden,
Tie you with green rope and murder you in this river?
What manner of men?

For all those of whom you were, of whom you are,
But know not of your mighty tomb,

I will weep for you, my friend, I will remember you.

***
Kengtung: Past and Present*

Thawi Swangpanyangkoon

Kengtung or Khemarat is the land that lies between Thailand and China - to the north of Thailand. It is the land of the Tai Khn, whom we [the Thai] call Tai Khoen. In the past Chiangtung1 was a state within the Kingdom of Lanna and during the Second World War it came under Thai rule as part of the Federation of the Original Thai (saharat thai doem).

Chiangtung is a blind spot among those who are knowledgeable about such matters, as the outside world has access to very few sources on it, compared to other similar localities. The reason for this is that scholars are unable to travel to Chiangtung because of a prohibition by the Burmese government making travel impossible, though the capital lies only a little over one hundred kilometres from Mae Sai. It was therefore very good fortune that the author was able to travel there at the beginning of April this year [1991] after a long wait of about ten years. Burma invited religious practitioners of three countries, Thailand Laos and China, to visit Chiangtung to celebrate the installation of a new chatr on the cedi on Moei mountain near the city. We obtained permission to travel from the committee supervising the Thai-Burmese border and the blessing of the Reverend Saen La, the Abbott of Wat Phra That, Tha Khi Lek.2 On the journey we were allowed to take photographs quite freely, which was contrary to usual practice, photography being strictly forbidden and cameras are not allowed into Burmese territory. We saw many small towns such as Mang Ko, Mang Len, Tha Da and Mang Phayak; also to visit many wat, for example Wat Com Doi, Wat Phra Caw Lan Thong (Mang Len) and Wat Ma'ang Kang. These were in addition to the wat in Chiangtung which we saw many times. Chiangtung is a very small city but it has numerous wat some of them closely packed next to each other. For example at the T-junction of Wat Hua Khuang there are also wat on the other two sides - Wat Phra Kaew and Wat Phra Caw Luang. Next to Wat Phra Kaew is the king's palace Hor Kham. Across the road are the palaces of many queens and Wat Chiang Jn, the abbott of which is the Chief Monk of Chiangtung.

The word mang is used in Chiangtung with the meaning of 'state', thus Mang Chiangtung is 'Khemarat'. But the word may also be used of an amphur or of a village as in Mang Phayak and Mang Len. Each mang has a centre which is known as a wiang. On our journey we saw sign posts saying Wiang Mang Phayak. As for Wiang Chiangtung this is the capital of the state of Khemarat, known in Pali as Tungkhaburi, named after Tongkha Rishi, who the chronicles say was the founder of the city.

The name Chiangtung is pronounced Ket-u by the Tai Jai, and the British administration spelled it 'Kengtung' after this pronunciation - and this is the spelling used in maps internationally, in government documents and scholarly works. The Tai Khoen themselves pronounce it Cetu and Sao Saimong Mangrai, who is also known as Chai Mang, spells it 'Jengtung', but this has not received much support. We Thai, were we to spell it as we pronounce it, would write 'Chughtung' or 'Chiangtung', which is not the generally preferred spelling. The author would prefer the spelling 'Kengtung' which is internationally recognized.

On the journey to Chiangtung we saw a picture of the seal of the rulers of Chiangtung which helped answer many questions. On the seals the Tai Khoen says cuum jin sanaam kham somdet phra pen caw mang chietu. In English,
The history of Chiangtung, according to the Khoen chronicles, says that more than 800 years ago it was inhabited by the Lua or La. Later King Mangrai of Chiangrai sent an army to seize the country, but was not able to defeat the Lua army. King Mangrai had to use deceit to do so. He sent his sons and nephews to rule the mang (see Tamnan Chiangtung and Phongsawadarn Chiangtung [translated] by the author). Today many nobles of Chiangtung use the surname Mangrai or Mengrai, such as the Tai Khoen philosopher, now deceased, Sao Saimong Mangrai, and Caw Khun Sk Mengrai, who now lives in Chiangmai. [Recently deceased.]

Ancient legend says that the Lord Buddha announced that south of Mang there was a large swamp which would be the site of a city and country which would be a support of his religion. Things happened as the Lord Buddha predicted. The last prince of the Wang Dynasty [as in original Thai] of China came down from Mang Wang and drained the water from the swamp. At first the canal was built to the south, but the water did not flow. It was then moved to the north and the water flowed away. The flow of the water was like the River Khn, that is the river in which the water ascended to the north. The people who lived there were therefore called the Tai Khn and the mang, Mang Khn. We Thai pronounce it as 'Khoen'.

Acharn Tawi in front of the palace, April 1991. It was demolished by SLORC in December

There are other various pronunciations and explanations, for example khn the river that flows upwards; others say khn referring to the land which emerged when the water was drained from the swamps.

The large swamp spoken of in the legend may still be seen Nong Tung, in the city of Chiangtung. The Rishi who was responsible for draining the swamp was
Tungkha Rishi, and the swamp was called Nong Tung and the city Tungkhaburi after the Rishi. There is a matter worth investigating do the many families whose names begin with Tungkha have any connection with Tungkhaburi?

Chiangtung is surrounded by mountain ranges and hills, Nong Tung lies within the city and outside the city are two rivers the Mae Nam Khn and the Mae Nam Larp, both of which flow into the Mae Nam Khong, which the Tai of the region all call the Mae Nam Khorng (kh). Wiang Chiangtung is thus blessed with plentiful water. When we compare Chiangtung with Chiangmai and Sukhothai we see that Chiangmai also has a large swamp, to the northeast, but today this has no water and local inhabitants have taken over the land and been duly issued with full land certificates according to law. The swamp therefore only remains in name, in the chronicles. As for Sukhothai, many factors were responsible for water being insufficient for the city's needs. Moreover, the inhabitants required a means of communication and they moved to live on the banks of the river, leaving the old city deserted.

The city of Chiangtung is situated far from other cities, bringing to mind the city of Dien Bien Phu, the capital of the Tai in north Vietnam. The difference is that Chiangtung has Buddhist monasteries and a more developed political system and culture.

The author's visit to Chiangtung was at the beginning of April the hottest time of the year. Nevertheless a blanket was necessary at night as the temperature was colder than usual. The water in the lake came right up the banks and no rubbish or detritus was visible on shore or in the water. We saw no one fishing or bathing in the water, but I do not know if there was any law preventing it.

The view around Nong Tung is very beautiful. There is no motorable road around the lake only a footpath, which, however, is used by motor-cyclists. It is reserved for the inhabitants of the city to calm their minds and exercise their bodies. The one thing that was displeasing was that the government had allowed two restaurants on the banks of the lake. These not only spoil the view, but also release dirty water into the lake. One hopes their number will not increase and ultimately prevent any view of Nong Tung at all.

Wiang Chiangtung has twelve gates which is a matter of some surprise, as the more gates a city has the more difficult it is to defend. The twelve gates are named as follows 1. Chialaan 2. P!ad 3. Pratuu Maan 4. N phaa 5. B i 6. Kai hai 7. Jaa pi 8. N lek 9. Jaa kham 10. C ma 11. Phaa ja 12. aam faa. The twelve gates of Chiangtung recall our own Chiangrai which also has twelve gates and probably follows the pattern of ancient Sri Kshetra of Burma. The number twelve may derive from the twelve animals of the cycle of years. It is also met in Sipsongpanna and Sipsong Caw Tai; though there are only ten panna left, two having been grabbed by France. A redivision of those remaining has restored the number to twelve. As for the twelve Caw Tai, it is difficult to find chiefs (caw) to make up the number. In truth the word cu' comes from the word caw meaning 'district' as in Laicaw and Mokcaw. As for the Black Tai and White Tai in Vietnam, they believe there were sixteen ancient mang not twelve.

Of the twelve gates of the present city of Chiangtung the author saw, and was able to photograph, onle two, Pa Daeng Gate (near Pa Daeng Village and Wat Pa
Daeng) which is near a lime kiln and is painted white. There is a new building built right up against it, but there are still traces of the original gate. This is better than some other places where the old structures have been completely demolished and replaced with new buildings which makes one wonder if one is being deceived. The other gate which still has traces of the old is Pratu Nong Pha. There are still traces of the wall on each side and an old pillar on each side. Apart from these two gates the only signs of the old city are traces of the old earth wall in a few places.

The old city is preserved in the pictures in Tamnan Wat Pa Daeng of Sao Saimong. The gate used to be of brick and the author has seen a later photograph of it painted with lime. When I finally got to Chiangtung I was astonished to see a new building standing right next to the gate, replacing the city wall.

Some hundred years ago, J.G. Scott wrote of the wall and the gate that the wall was about fifteen feet high (4.5 m.) and because the bricks had not been properly fired it had collapsed in some places. Thus, though it was pleasing to look at, it could not have inspired much fear in the enemy. Besides, southwest of the city were a number of hills which overlooked the city, and if cannon were mounted on any of them, every part of the city would have been in range. The city wall had a total length of 4 3/4 miles and there were ten gates. At the time of Scott's visit, 14 March 1890, there were only two with enough wall around them to defend the city. The rest had all collapsed. Only half the city was occupied the northern part. The area was covered in growths of large trees and swamps. There were 6-800 houses and a population of about 15-20 thousand (Sao Saimong 1965:207).

Scott looked at Chiangtung from the point of view of a soldier, and it was not difficult to be critical. It was a small town with a small population, the largest building being the Golden Palace, the palace of the king and the 'golden court'. It was a beautiful European style building across from the Tung lake. A little way from the palace there were many two-storeyed houses, the palaces of the queens of Caw Fa Korn Kaew Inthalaeng who had six wives. The palace next to Wat Chiang Jn was that of Mae Caw Nang Buathip Luang. This house is now abandoned. The palace itself has been taken over by the Burmese for government offices.

The palace we see today was built in the reign of Caw Ratana Korn Kaew Inthalaeng who was the father of Caw Kong Tai (who was executed) and the grandfather of the Crown Prince (Caw Chai Luang), later the last king of Chiangtung, who now lives in Rangoon.

The title Caw Fa causes some confusion. The ruler of the mang was called Caw na hua (lit. 'Lord above the head') or Somdet phra pen caw. But we follow Burmese usage and use the term Caw Fa (Sawbwa) which is confused with the title given to all the sons of the king, whether or not the mother was of noble birth. The daughters of the king were known as Caw nang fa. The chief queen was known as Caw nang mang or Mahathewi. The other wives of the king were known as Mae caw nang for instance King Phroml had a wife who was known as Mae Caw Nang Thipawan. In Chiangmai the term used was Caw mae.

Caw Chai Luang, the last king was deposed by General Ne Win and was incarcerated for six years after the 1962 coup. He is now forced to live in the capital and is not allowed to return to Chiangtung. The only other member of the line is Caw
Bunwart Wongsa, who is allowed to live in Chiangtung. He used to be an ambassador abroad for the Burmese government.

Caw Chai Luang is a modern man, having been educated in England and Australia, and he has visited Bangkok and Chiangmai many times. He was born on 10 September 2470 (Thai reckoning, 2471 Burmese reckoning) 04.15 hours. He was crowned king on the 11th day of the waxing moon of the 6th month Khoen, or the 5th month Thai 2489 BE (2490 in Burmese reckoning). He ruled till 2505 (or 2506 Burmese), a period of sixteen years, when he was deposed with all the other rulers of the Shan states after the Ne Win coup.

Chiangtung is a Buddhist country, its inhabitants are devout Buddhists who respect the holy sites and the Sangha. They accept that they must perform the following rituals: the ordination of novices, the senior ordination, the sugar cane merit-making ritual and the Vessantara ritual. Their devotion may be seen in the many monasteries built in the city, many adjacent to each other, and all beautifully adorned and cedi in various styles according to the period at which each was built.

According to the chronicles the oldest are Wat Phra Kaew and Wat Hua Khuang these being situated on either side of the road next to the Golden Palace. These two, together with Wat Fa Kang and Wat Con Thong were built in the reign of Caw Chetubandhu or Sattaphanthuraja (1893-1920 BE). Later Caw Sam or Phya Kong Ratanapheri built Wat Jang Kham and Wat Chiang Lae at about the same time and of the same dimensions (1962-86 BE).

The Thai like only one principal Buddha image in their viharn, but in Chiangtung there may be over ten large statues of about the same size arranged in three or four rows. There are few wat which have coloured paintings on the ceilings: the pictures are painted in gold lines. A modern ceiling painted in Tai Khoen style in colour may be seen in Chiangmai, in Wat Tha Kradad in Amphur Mang.

One should not try to guess the age of a wat in Chiangtung by what one sees, for old buildings are always being pulled down and new ones put in their place. Sao Saimong relates stories of demolitions of viharn and cedi (1981: 8). In the cedi of Wat Sinhalahokat there were many hundreds of Buddha images, each about three and a half inches high, made of bronze and with a dated gold leaf base. However, no one kept a record for future generations before the images were reburied under the new cedi.

Today, both Protestant and Catholic Christianity have taken hold in Chiangtung and are making progress because of their access to money and modern technology.

During the time of the Caw Fa the language of administration was Tai Khoen and the script used was tua mang or Lanna written in Tai Khoen style. There are however, many differences and it is very easy for a Chiangmai reader to make mistakes. For example the vowel " in Tai Khoen is written like the vowel 'ii' in Lanna. Also some letters are absent in Lanna. The Tai Khoen use this script in everyday use, and they therefore have a beautiful flowing hand. For instance the letter 'cha', which in Lanna has to be written in three strokes, needs only a single stroke in Khoen. Tai Khoen who use the tua mang alphabet, which originally came from north Thailand, now far out number those who can write it in its place of origin. In Chiangtung there is not a single monk who cannot read the script, while in north Thailand there are always complaints that in some
monasteries there is not a single monk who can. Chiangtung is therefore one of the last bastions of the Lanna script, which at one time was used in five different regions Laos, northeast Thailand, Lanna, Tai Khoen and Tai L of Sipsongpanna.

Because Chiangtung is a closed region and foreigners cannot enter, ancient manuscripts, palm leaf and the folded sa paper used for sacred texts and secular literature, may be found in great abundance, unlike in north Thailand where they have become very scarce as there is no means of protecting them and some foreign countries have used various means to exploit the situation.

The Caw Fa brought typewriters to Chiangtung, having contracted an English firm to make fifty machines. The news is that the Government of Burma has confiscated these machines and will not allow them to be used. The few that remain have to be hidden.

Devising a typewriter for Lanna script is a very difficult task as consonants occur both above and below the line and have to be combined with tone markers. Some words must be written at three or four levels. No other Tai area has been able to construct a typewriter for the script.

In Chiangtung there are still printing presses which produce Tai Khoen script. There was formerly one press, Khemarat Press of Uthip Saengamat. This press could take jobs in four languages using old fonts and old-style machines Tai Khoen, Tai Jai, Burmese and English. It published a weekly newspaper, The Khemarat printed in both Tai Khoen and Tai Jai scripts. It published primers for learning Tai Khoen Books 1-4. It published religious texts and Jataka stories, and two primers for learning English. Khun Uthip Saengamat must be congratulated on the magnificent service he has rendered Tai Khoen language and literature. The old man is now over 80 years old. The newspaper has stopped publishing because newsprint is no longer available. The other reason is the change in the system of government to direct rule by the Burmese.

Burmese is now the compulsory language and Tai Khoen is slowly going the way of the Lanna language, where all that remains is the spoken language and there is the fear that it might go the way of Ahom.

When the writer was in Chiangtung there was another press, the Singha Press in addition to the Khemarat. There was also a third press in Wat Khemintr. They all complained they could not get newsprint.

The difficult road to Chiangtung and the Burmese policy of keeping the area closed has helped preserve the country as an area of Tai culture worth studying for its history, archaeology and literature. But when a sealed road is completed and the country opened to the outside, the world of condominiums is something that cannot be escaped. Then the culture of the Tai Khoen, which many have desired to encounter, will come to an end.

Translated by Gehan Wijeyewardene.

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The Ethnic Group 'Meng'1
The word Meng is the term used by the people of the north, or Lanna, for the people of Mon-Khmer ancestry. Jit Phoumisak believed that Meng is the same word as Mon. The Mon referred to themselves as ermY (The Mon inscription of BE 1644-1645). This latter word was pronounced more like rmn (Mon Inscription of BE2022). The Thai of the central region received this spelling as r;maY but the Mon pronounced it as rmn. Later h-m'qn which the Thai pronounced as 'Mn'. The people of the north received the word as ermY (remY), but pronounced it with a Lanna accent as meng, for the people of Lanna pronounced the letter Y as 'ng', for example as in the phrase edVqeBY became edVqneBY (dan peng), bMeB~Y (bamphen) becomes pMep~ (pampeng) baYjr (banchn) becomes eb~cr (bengcn). The word ermY was therefore pronounced as remY (rameng) and later as meng, because there is no 'r' sound in the Lanna language. The words meng, mon, raman, ramen are therefore all the same word referring to the ancient Mon, and the people of Lanna refer to them as Meng in the old documents (Jit Phoumisak 2519: 143). On the evidence of the inscriptions and art available through excavation, we may hypothesize that the centre of the ancient Mon, or the Meng was the basin of the Chao Phraya that is, the Kingdom of Dvaravati, during the 12-13th Centuries BE. Mon inscriptions have been found in Nakhorn Pathom, Ratburi, Uthong and Lopburi. The civilization of the Meng or Mon spread throughout the northeast and north, Mon inscriptions are found at Mang Fa Daed Sung Jang, in Kalasin Province and at Hariphunchai (Lamphun) dated to the 16th Century BE and the early 17th. Later the centre of Mon or Meng civilization moved to southern Burma, to the city of Sathoen during the 16th Century BE (Phornphan 2529: 57, 62 cited by Withun). Research on the Meng in the north should take account of materials from literature, inscriptions, art, archaeology and research reports.

The Meng appear in the literary work from Laos concerning Thaw Hung or Thaw Cang. Khun Cang in this work is a culture hero of many peoples the Lao, and inhabitants of Isarn, Lanna, and Chiangtung (Kentung). It is believed Khun Cang goes back to 1625-1705 (Anan 2528: 8). In this literary work the Meng are referred to as Merng, Mon and Khorm and are said to be the same people. It relates that the Queen Mother of Khun Cang was Mon and is referred to in the book Thaw Hung or Thaw Cang as Meng. The Kingdom of Mang Suan Tan of the father of Khun Cang was adjacent to the Meng kingdom in poetry referred to as 'The city of the lords of Mang Meng, the world of humans'. The aunt of Khun Cang was Meng, her daughter called Nang Ngorm was also known as Nang Meng, Nang Mon, Luk Meng, Luk Khorm. [The author then cites the ancient Lao verse.]

The Royal Mother of Khun Cang sent an ambassador to ask for the hand of Nang Ngorm on behalf of Khun Cang. The Royal Mother of Nang Ngorm demanded an exorbitant bride price. The mother of Khun Cang accused the princess's mother of trying to sell her daughter. [Citation]

In the ritual offerings to the ancestral spirits of Nang Ngorm, the phi dam, they are invited to come and partake of offerings. These rituals are performed.
We see from the story of Thaw Hung or Cang that already in the 17th Century BE, the territory of Ngern Yang of Lanna had relations with the Meng, and since then, we find communities of Meng, Lua and Lawa living north of the Mae Ping River (Jit 2519: 143-46).

The narrative poem of Hariphunchai which is believed to have been composed in the 21st or 22nd Century BE refers to the Meng and the Marn (Burmese) [Citation]. Similarly, the poem Mangsa rop Chiangmai written about 2156 BE refers to the Mon as Meng and the Burmese as Marn. [Citation]

In the chronicle Singhanawat Yonok Chaiburi Chiangsaen (Sanguan 2516: 86) and the chronicle Singhanawat Kumarn (Manit 2516: 90) it is clearly stated that in about the year 1547, in the time of Phra Caw Chaisiri, the heir of Phra Caw Phrom, a king from the land of Meng raised an army and invaded the city of Chaiprakarn: At that time there was a great king of the land of Meng who was blessed with a time of good fortune, there, on the west bank of the River Khong (Salween). He raised a force of one million seven hundred thousand troops and crossed the Khong to seize the city of Chaiprakarn.

During the Rattanakosin period, the Chiangmai Chronicle refers to the Mon who migrated [to Chiangmai] from Hongsawadi [Pegu] on its capture by the Burmese, as meng. Also, the village of Thaa Kan (which today lies in the district of Sanpatong, Chiangmai, was then a village serving Hariphunchai) at that time received the families of Meng refugees to Chiangmai. It is referred to as follows [partial translation only]: In the year 1119 (BE2300) the Marn [Burmese] raised an army [and attacked] the Meng and the marn died in large numbers. The Meng did not have great numbers but the Marn were everywhere. The Meng were defeated and they took their families and came to Chiangmai (Tamnan Phnmang Chiangmai 2514: 84).

It will therefore be seen that from ancient times until the Rattanakosin period, the people of Lanna referred to the Mon as Meng.

The Chamathewiwong which was composed by Phra Phothirangsi in about 2060 BE says of the Mae Nam Ping valley that it was the place of habitation of the Mengkhbutr the native inhabitants of the River Ping valley. Their way of life was that of a 'tribal society'.2 There were many kin groups [trakun] living in close proximity to each other. Each kin group had an animal as its emblem such as 'rhinoceros', 'elephant', 'ox' and 'deer'.

Later on the Rishi Vasudeva, who was a stranger learned in the culture of India, migrated to the area and married into a kin group of the Mengkhbutr with the symbol of the deer. He created a political system in which this kin group were the rulers. This political unit was known as Mikhasankhornakhorn and Samanthatrapathet. The society changed from one based on kin groups to an 'urban society' [see fn.2]. Later the country was devastated by a flood and large numbers of people died.3 The Rishi Vasudeva then built a new mang that called Hariphunchai (Srisak 2525: 84-86). The Mengkhbutr referred to are thought to be the Meng or ancient Mon living in the valley of the Mae Ping, and this view is agreed to by Jit Phoumisak, Phraya Prachakitchakorncac and Srisak Vallibotama.

Later when Queen Chamathewi arrived from Lavo and ruled Hariphunchai she brought
with her the culture of Lavo which changed the culture of the Mae Ping valley, bringing Theravada [the Thai writes 'Hinayana'] Buddhism which was mixed with the original belief in spirits of the Meng. Government was through the institution of kingship. Society was influenced by the migration of people from the Kingdom of Lavo. There were, at that time, many Lawa or Lua living in the Mae Ping valley and local legends tell of the relationship between Queen Chamathewi and Khun Luang Vilangka, the leader of the Lua (Srisak 2525: 93).

We may then say that during the 13th Century BE the Mengkhabutr or Meng or ancient Mon had social contact and mixed with other groups such as the Lavo and the Lua while developing their culture into that of Hariphunchai through the influence of a Dvaravati-type culture from Lavo and the central region. The Kingdom of Dvaravati belonged to a people speaking ancient Mon in the central region. They moved their culture and their authority to the Meng of Hariphunchai and later still extended it to the valley of the Wang river and Lampang.

According to the researches of Professor Srisak Vallibotama on Hariphunchai art i.e. that of the Mon found in Hariphunchai and subordinate cities such as Wiang Thor in Amphur Chom Thong, Wiang Ta Karn (or Trakarn) in Amphur Sanpatong and Wiang Mano in Amphur Hang Dong (all Chiangmai), there are art objects such as Buddha images, amulets and inscriptions in Mon which are similar to those found in the central and northeastern regions. In particular, the ancient Mon inscriptions found here have a date similar to the inscriptions of the reign of Kyanzittha in Pagan, about 1628-55 BE, which suggests that the Meng, or the Mon, of the Mae Ping Valley, of the central and northeastern regions, had relations with the Mon of southern Burma (Srisak 2525: 93). Furthermore, the Chamathewiwongse says that the Meng of Hariphunchai fled the plague and went to Mang Pha Kho [Pegu] for a period of six years. The Meng of Hariphunchai and the Mon of Pegu used the same language. As the chronicle says, The people of the capital Hongsawadi knew each other well and loved each other. The language they used was the same and not a single word was different (Phra Phothirangsi 2510: 80).

The Meng of Hariphunchai and the Mon of south Burma had close relations with each other. Professor Piriya Krairiksh believes that if we follow the inscriptions, during the 12th and 13th Centuries BE, the centre of the ancient Mon was in the Chao Phraya valley and the Dvaravati art style appears everywhere in the adjoining kingdoms. Before the 16th Century BE the centre had moved to what is now modern Burma (Phornphan 2519: 57, referred to in Vithoon n.d.a.:5).

The modern Meng, according to the research of Vithoon Buadaeng and others, appear to have been much influenced by other groups inhabiting the region the Khon Mang, L, Khoen and Yorng. The Meng are considered to be one of the important ethnic groups of the region, living scattered about among the other groups. The extent of settlement may be seen in the number of place names which end with the word 'meng'. For example, Ban Huai Meng in Tambon Wiang, Chiangkhong, Chiangrai; Ban Sanna Meng, Sansai, Chiangmai; Ban Na Meng, Sanpatong, Chiangmai; Ban Meng, Lampang. In addition there are Meng villages around Lamphoon which must have been established in ancient times and been the centre of Meng culture. Examples are Ban Nong Du and Ban Bo Khaw in Pasang, Ban Nong Khrop and Ban Ko Chok in Sanpatong, Chiangmai which lie on either side of the Mae Ping. Today these four villages have about 780 houses and a combined population of about 3080. These villages preserve the language and the customs of their ancestors customs such as the belief in spirits and the dance of the
Meng spirits (Vithoon n.d.a.:92).

The benefit of a comparative study of the Meng who now inhabit Chiangmai and Lamphun, together with the study of documents, art and inscriptions is that it helps us to understand the Meng, to see that many aspects of their culture appear to have come down through the years to the present; for example their language, the custom of dancing phi meng, the boat sacrifice and the custom of taking Phra Upakut in procession all customs which have also passed on to modern Khon Mang.

The Meng or ancient Mon alphabet developed and became the alphabet of the local language of the north, that is, the Dhamma script of Lanna (Thavat 2528: 116). The Meng calendar. The calendar was introduced and used in conjunction with the Lanna calendar in both palm leaf manuscripts and inscriptions. We find clear reference to Meng dates, for instance in the inscription of Wat Phra Jn [citation giving a 'Thai' date and a Meng date (Silpakorn 2500: 65)]. The Tamnan Pingkarajawongpakorn also writes of Meng dates [citation (Sanguan 2515: 434)].

Phi Meng The Meng have performed rituals for spirits since ancient times. The Lao literary work Thaw Hung (Cang) says that Nang Ngorm made offerings to the spirits of her ancestors, inviting the Great Spirit of Mang Meng to partake of the offerings. Khun luang caw mang Meng ma kin (Sila, 11). The Meng still pay homage to the spirits and there is the ritual known as 'dancing for the Meng spirits'. There are three types of important spirits for the Meng; a. The spirits of the ancestors known as phi puu a. The Meng later persuaded the Khon Mang to make offerings to their own ancestors to ensure prosperity. These became known as phi mod, and to this day homage is paid to phi meng and phi mod. b. Phi sa ban. These are spirits that look after the village, keep it in peace and happiness, free from danger to life and property, and ensures the seasons follow their due course. Today there are shrines [in all villages] and offerings are made each year. c. Forests spirits who exist outside the boundaries of the village. These could be the spirits of those who have died unnatural deaths, spirits of abandoned monasteries and spirits of the fields. These spirits do harm and bring sickness. (Vithoon n.d.a.: 45).

The boat offering (c kr). This is the ritual performed by the Meng of the north at the festival of Loi Krathong. They construct a boat of coconut leaves, place various foods and other provisions in it and place it in the wiharn for monks to chant over. Each person in the village lights a candle as a token of his or her ill-fortune. At night the boat is taken in procession from the monastery to the river. They believe that the boat will take away their ill-fortune. If the boat turns and returns to its place of launching the whole village must perform the ritual of sad khr to remove the ill-fortune and the ritual of the boat must be performed again. This ritual is very much like the ritual of floating a fire boat in the northeast (Vithoon n.d.a.: 97-98). The ritual is probably very old. In the Chamathewiwongse it is said that when the Meng of Hariphunchai fled to Hongsawadi in Burma, they floated rice, fish and other foods down the river as an offering on behalf of their [dead] relatives (Phra Phothirangsi 2510: 80-81).

Phra Upakut. When a village has a public festival such as celebrating the completion of a wiharn or uposata the Meng believe that Phra Upakut must be invited. He is a powerful being who lives in the ocean and can ensure the success of the particular festival. There is therefore a ritual of taking Phra
Upakut in procession, with a rock being the symbol of his presence. The rock is taken from the river and placed in a special shrine built in the monastery. Some monasteries such as Wat Nong Khrop and Wat Song Khaew have permanent shrines for this purpose. The Khon Mang have similar beliefs and practices (Vithoon n.d.a.:97-100).

To summarize: Meng is the name of an ethnic group that lives in the north. It is believed they settled in the Mae Ping valley before the establishment of Hariphunchai in about the 13th Century BE. They probably lived together with the Lawa or Lua. When Queen Chamathewi brought Mon or Dvaravati civilization from the central plain to Hariphunchai, the original Meng (Mengkhabutr) together with the Mon of Lavo created the culture of Hariphunchai. Through the study of art, archaeology, inscriptions and manuscripts it is seen that Hariphunchai and its subordinate cities have ancient buildings, art objects, such as cedi, Buddha images and amulets, and Mon inscriptions which show that from the 12th Century BE onwards the Meng of this area had relations with the Mon of what is now southern Burma. During the Rattanakosin period, when the Burmese seized Hongsawadi in 2306 BE, many Meng or Mon migrated to the northern and central regions. Many people of the north who have been influenced by Bangkok also refer to these people as Mon. They have now mixed with the Meng of the north, with Lua and with Khon Mang. There are still many Meng who retain their identity, particularly in the Mae Ping valley in Chiangmai and Lamphun provinces. They still preserve their language and their culture and many of their customs are different from those of others in the region. This is similar to the situation of the Lua who also live scattered throughout the region, but who also preserve their language and culture. Though much has changed over time, Meng culture remains to be researched and investigated.

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Motifs in a Kammu Story from Yunnan

Li Daoyong, Kristina Lindell, Jan-jvind Swahn and Damrong Tayanin

Tha Kammu in China live in the Mengla and Jinghong counties of Yunnan Province in southwestern China. There are some 22 villages altogether the number varies somewhat, since sometimes villages are divided and new villages erected. At present the Kammu population amounts to more than 1,700 persons.

Despite the fact that the Kammu population in Yunnan is rather small, there are two distinct dialects. One of them has tones, as have the northern dialects of Laos; the other one has retained unvoiced initials, as in the southern dialects in Laos. The two dialects are mutually intelligible. It seems, however, as if the toneless variant is more common in China.

The story presented here was recorded on tape in 1988 in Pungs village in Mengla county by Professor Li Daoyong of the Central Institute of Nationalities, Peking. The story was told by Miss Lun Kaa, a twenty-one year old Kammu lady born in the village where she took part in all kinds of women's work. Thus she had ample opportunity to hear stories told in the traditional way. In 1988 she was still living in her home village, but since then she has moved and is now working in a sugar factory in Mengpeng. As will be noted, Miss Lun Kaa is not a very experienced teller it requires many years of training to become really adept but she heard and learnt stories from other tellers, especially from a lady of some seventy or eighty years of age.
It is a pleasure to note that a young lady of twenty-one is able to tell some of the age-old stories in the traditional way. Up to the present she has recorded ten stories, but not all were learnt from the same old lady. We very much hope that it will be possible to record even more stories told by both these tellers. Li Daoyong has not met the old lady teller in person, although she is still living, but information from the villagers seems to indicate that her idiolect is a more pure variant of Kammu than the common daily speech in the village.

During a year-long stay as a guest researcher on the Kammu Village Project at Lund University, Li Daoyong presented stories in his collection from the Kammu and Wa ethnic groups in Yunnan. Dr Damrong Tayanin transcribed some of the stories, and the tales were then translated and commented upon in co-operation with Professor Jan-jvind Swahn and Kristina Lindell.

In the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter No. 13 (June 1991), a brief note was published on our computer-based Motif-Index for Folk Tales from Southeast Asia, which uses Stith Thomson's Motif-Index of Folk Literature as a basis.

We selected the Naa K Kw story as an illustration of the work on motifs. The tale was not chosen because it is an unusual story. Quite the contrary; it was chosen because it contains several motifs that anyone who has read folktale will recognise.

The number(s) of each motif is in parentheses after the section where it was found, and after the story there is a list of all the motifs in the order they appear in Thompson's Motif-Index.

In order to work on motifs one needs to have a general understanding of the organization of the General Synopsis of the Motif-Index, presented on pages 29-35 in Volume 1:

A. Mythological Motifs
B. Animal
C. Taboo
D. Magic, etc.

Unfortunately the index found in Volume 6 is not easy to use and will have to be reorganised at a later date.

At the very beginning of the Naa K Kw tale, we hear of a widow who became thirsty when she weeded her field. To quench her thirst she formed a cone out of a leaf, filled the cone with urine from an elephant's footprint and drank it. After that she found herself pregnant and had a daughter.

One interesting piece of information in this section will not be found in the Motif-Index and should not be inserted in it; the cone for drinking. This is not a folklore motif; it is a cultural fact. In Southeast Asia one often drinks water in this way, and this piece of information therefore has nothing to do with epic imagination.

The unusual way of begetting a child, on the other hand, is clearly a motif. As Jan-jvind Swahn expresses it: "If a man kills his enemy with a sword, that is just what a man usually does when he kills an enemy, but if he possesses
a magic sword which flies off and kills his enemy for him, you have a folklore motif".

In our list of motifs, the Strange Conception has no less than three different numbers, and these will serve as an explanation of the work.

In the General Synopsis the letter T stands for Sex, and numbers T500-T599 deal with Conception and Birth. This is obviously where the correct number should be sought or, in case no suitable motif is found, inserted. The Detailed Synopsis preceding T (Sex) in Volume 5 informs us that T510 begins a section dealing with Miraculous Conception, and thus we have placed the motif in a broad way. Within this same section, however, T512 Conception from Drinking is also found. Under this number the Motif-Index gives us sufficient bibliography to facilitate comparisons with, for instance, Hindu and Indonesian tales. Should we like to zoom in closer to the motif as it appears in our tale, there ought to be something about elephant's urine. This idea could hardly occur anywhere but in Southeast and Southern Asia or in Africa, and is therefore of particular interest for a motif-index of Southeast Asian tales. However, it is not found in Thompson's Motif-Index. In our list it has the number T512.2.2.*, and is marked with an asterisk because it is a suggested new number.

Hopefully it will not be too difficult to follow our reasoning when reading through the story and looking up the motifs in Thompson's Motif-Index. In doing so, the reader will certainly observe that some of the motifs we have listed are of little importance to the flow of the story. Normally we would not have mentioned some of them, but since in this case we are trying to illustrate practice in tracing motifs, we have squeezed in almost every motif from the tale.

Out of forty-eight motifs, no less than seventeen have an asterisk, showing that they are suggested new numbers. It is significant that about one-third of the motifs are new and shows that motifs in Southeast Asia do not totally agree with those of Europe; from the Bibliography in the Motif-Index it is also clear that there is a much greater correspondence with Indian and Far Eastern motifs. The letter P for Society has a great share of the asterisked new motifs, and they all fall within the group P200-P299 (The Family). This is an indication that perhaps family matters are of great importance in Southeast Asian tales.

How other Kammu tellers use some of the motifs may be seen from a comparison with the tales we have published. All our publications of tales have a list of motifs appended.

There are other things to be learnt from the work on the motifs. For instance, it will be found that the teller despite the many glaring errors in the telling has put her motifs together coherently so that they form a comprehensible tale. It will also be seen that the teller does not handle all her motifs well. She introduces motifs which she then just drops without making full use of them; we sometimes find it difficult to interpret her motifs. By working on the motifs the reader will thus be able to form quite a precise opinion of the teller's performance as regards the contents of the tale.

Motifs may thus be used for many different purposes, and it is our hope that researchers collecting the rapidly vanishing treasure of tales in Southeast
Asia will consider giving their publications some folklore comments relevant to folklore's classifications to facilitate the work of folklorists.

The Story of Naa K Kw

I am Kammu and from MO(-i)ang Maa, and today I will tell one story, that of Naa K Kw:

Now you know, a certain widow who had no husband went to weed her field. Then she was thirsty, but the water in the pool had gone dry. Wherever she looked for water there was none, wherever she looked for water there was none.

When she then went to look for it on the mountain ridge, she came across an elephant eating rattan there. The elephant let its water [i.e. urinated], and she then went and made a cone from a leaf, filled it and drank, filled it and drank.

After that Naa K Kw was born. (B631.10.*, T510ff, T512, T512.2.2.*)

She then grew up and became a young girl, and she asked about her father.

Her mother said: "Your father is an elephant, If you want to find your father, go and look for him at the mountain ridge down there!" (H1381.2, H1381.1.1)

She went and finally she came across that elephant which was eating rattan there. She called out: "Father!"

The elephant scolded her: "I do not yet have any children".

She said: "Long ago my mother who has no husband went to weed the field and became thirsty. She went and scooped up your urine and drank it, and she became pregnant and bore me. Now regarding me, everybody else has a father, and all of them have silver and riches and I don't. After that ... I want to get bracelets, to get necklaces, to get earrings. Please, be my father and see to it that I get some!"

"Well, if you really are my child, yes, if you really and truly are my child, then ... go round my elephant tusk seven times. If it falls out, you are not my child, but if it does not fall out you are".

She thus went round it seven times, and since it did not fall out, it did not hurt her feet. (H486, H486.3.*)

Consequently he gave her a box, gave her bracelets and necklaces. (B584, B584.2.*)

She then returned, she returned ... returned ...5

He told her to take an egg and to pull out a hair and wrap it around the egg and set it afloat on the river.6 Set afloat. (D991, D1024)

She returned and set it afloat, returned and set it afloat. (N513.4.1.*)

After that young men from every village and every place went to seize it, went to fetch it, but they did not succeed. Even those who had a wife did the same ... dressed up ... his father and mother went to bathe ... wanted to
bathe, and thus others fetched the water to give him a bath (inaudible)

On that day a young man wanted to go and bathe, go and bathe. The box came floating, and he stretched out his hands and the box landed in the palm of his hand, landed in the palm of his hand. He went home and brooded that egg, and when it hatched, out came a cock. (D1174, F989.20)

After that he went to look for the master, he looked for Naa K Kw. He took a hundred underlings with him and went ... When he went the cock crowed, the cock ... (H1381.3.1, B172, B211.3.2, B450, B469.5)

Then that cock crowed:

Cock-a-doodle-do,
Naa K Kw with the knot of hair.
Cock-a-doodle-do,
Naa K Kw with the knot of hair.
Is the dear lady in this village
Or in the next, dear?

Then the hens of their village answered: "Not here". (B131.7.*) They then went up to the second village, and the cock crowed again:

Cock-a-doodle-do,
Naa K Kw with the knot of hair.
Is the dear lady in this village
Or in the next, dear?

Then the hens of their village answered: "Not here". They then went up to the third village, and the cock crowed again:

Cock-a-doodle-do,
Naa K Kw with the knot of hair.
Is the dear lady in this village
Or in the next, dear?

The hens in the third village answered: "Not here".

They then went up to the fourth, went up to the fourth village, and the cock crowed again. Then the demon hens answered that she was in their village.

They then invited his underlings to enter, but however many entered just vanished, however many entered they just vanished. The demons made an enormous drum from ryO(_,)-wood, and then they caught everyone who entered and threw them, everyone who entered they caught and locked inside the ryO(_,)-wood drum. Finally only the master himself remained. (G422.1, D1210)

He thought: "However many enter, all my underlings are gone".

He followed them in and looked for his underlings, but they were not there, since she had taken them and thrown them into her ryO(_,)-wood drum. He looked at the drum and saw a ... heard a knock. He let them out, he asked them ... He took his knife and cut the drum open, and all of them came out. (R110, R112.3.1.*)

They then went higher up again, went up to the fifth village, went up to the fifth village, and the cock crowed, went up and asked there, if she stayed there, Naa K Kw.
She took the rice water along and waited, sat in the house and waited, went out to sit on the balcony and gazed and saw the leader and his people come up, and then they came up and asked her.

After that they stayed in this village and got married, celebrated their wedding, celebrated their wedding. Then they had two children, one was a daughter and one was a son. After that they were to return to let her be the daughter-in-law, after three years they were to return and let her be the daughter-in-law. When they had packed up their things, they were to return on horseback. (P215. *)

The daughter returned carrying her younger brother; they went homewards and came along the path. They went homewards and her mother warned her and said: "When you return along the path, if your brother cries, don't pick red flowers and let your brother play with them!" (C515, C515.1.*, C901.1.7. *)

She said: "No".

Then Naa K Kw returned on horseback with her husband. The daughter went homewards on foot carrying her younger brother. When they came along the path, the brother began to cry and wanted to get red flowers. Whatever flowers she got to let him play with, he did not play, whatever flowers she got to let him play with he did not play, and when she suckled him,9 he did not suck. (P253, P253.6.1.*)

Finally she picked some red flowers for him to play with, and then a demon woman went to beat their mother, to trample their mother. Their mother died and became a fish. The demon woman changed, changed herself into Naa K Kw. (C920, D170, D665.4.*, G400, G407.*, K1911, K1911.2.1)

They returned, returned and came to the village, returned and came to the village. The husband ... The father, the mother, people of the village went to meet [them], old people, old people went to meet them. They took material, took eggs, took food to give them, were to meet ..., were to eat ..., were to meet the daughter-in-law. Then ... what was it, she was ..., however many eggs they gave her, she just broke them and ate them, broke them and ate them, and what, well, the material she tore in pieces and flung away.

They then lived like that, and she pretended to be the mother of the children.

She returned ..., as for the child she carried her younger brother, took her brother along to go and wash his hair in rice water. She went down to the Mekhong, and there she saw that fish. When the fish which stayed near the river saw her own children, it cried pitifully and said: "Mother, I am your mother". It said: "she who returned to live with your father is a demon woman. She trampled me, ate me. I died and became a fish, and then she married your father. That is not their real mother, their real mother is me". (B211.5)

For a while she sucked the younger brother, sucked the child. Then she jumped over twelve mountain ranges. (D688, F684, F1071)

Her child then went home to her father, went home and told her father. The father did not believe her. (P235.*)
She went again, went and called her mother to come out and suckle her brother: "Mother, oh mother, if mother is still in the Mekhong, come down and come out to suckle my younger brother, please!"

She then returned, returned and sucked the younger brother ... her child.

After that she went, went and jumped over the twelve mountain ranges.

The child went home and told her father: "Father, our mother became a fish and stays near the river. The one here is a demon woman". She said like this. (P235.1.∗)

She then ..., the father did not believe her and said: "Are you lying, child?"

She said: "No, I am not lying. Tomorrow I will go to suckle my brother again".

Their father said: "If that is indeed so, get some of her breast milk and bring it along home! Is she really your mother?"

The following day she went, went and called again: "Mother, oh mother, come down the Ou river, the Mekhong river, please, come back and suckle my younger brother!"

She returned, returned and suckled her child. Then she let her child press out her breast milk and put it in a leaf cone. She returned, with the cone with her mother's breast milk she returned and let her father take a look.

She said: "Father, this is mother's breast milk. You did not believe it, so she pressed it out for you to see, she then pressed it out ... If you do not believe it, just look!"

He then looked, and, indeed, it was true. (H62, H62.1.3.∗)

He then thought of getting his wife back. He ordered, thought of a way to get his wife back, gave orders to catch his wife, and thus he ordered his underlings to go.

They went up and surrounded the village, surrounded the path. Then he let his child go and call again.

The child went to call again, went to call, just at the moment she was to escape along the Ou, along the Mekhong, she was on a raft in the midle of the Mekhong. Just then her child arrived, went to call her, call. She then did not go away, she then returned, then ... then she sucked her child, returned and warned her child: "Don't come again, child! I will ... I will escape, will go away, will ... will go to the are of S'ca, of the Ou, of the Mekhong down there. You should take your younger brother to stay with your father!"

The child said: "Oh mother, if I return, you please send me off, I am small, I am afraid!"
At the path the others had now completed the encirclement, and the underlings had gone to wait at the path, wait in order to catch her. She went, returned in order to follow her child. The child said that she feared the fishing cat and let her mother return to follow her. When they came to that spot, she said: "Now hurry up home, child, I will go my way."

The child then said: "Oh, return and follow me over there, I fear the tiger".

She then returned to follow her there, returned to a certain spot and then said: "Now hurry up home, child, mother will be going".

"Oh mother, I am afraid of ... those bushes. Please mother, return and follow me there!"

When she had followed her to those bushes, the others jumped out, out and caught her, fettered her and brought her back and tied her under the house. (P232.3.*)

On her own account the demon woman went around snooping, went around snooping. Then she said to herself: "Today I will be able to eat meat. Today I will be able to eat fish meat".

He wanted to strengthen her soul, it was the husband who said ... to the demon woman: "Fetch rice water today and take a bath and dress up beautifully. Today we kill this fish and bind your wrists".

She thus washed her hair in rice water, combed her hair carefully and poured out water on a leaf to mirror herself, combed her hair carefully and put flowers behind her ears, thus ...

He who was her husband took his sword and cut her down. She then shed red blood, the blood poured out, and thus he took it and poured it over the fish, and look! She became Naa K Kw as before. (D766.2)

The two of them got married. (K1911.3)
There it ends.

Motifs

B131.7.* Cock's and hens' conversation reveals where certain girl lives.
B172 Magic bird.
B211.3.2 Speaking cock.
B211.5 Speaking fish.
B450 Helpful bird.
B469.5 Helpful cock.
B584 Animal gives man other gifts.
B584.2.* Elephant gives human daughter jewellery.
B631.10.* Human offspring of woman and elephant (Jfr T512.2.2.* nedan!).
C515 Taboo: touching (plucking) flowers.
C515.1.* Taboo: plucking red flowers.
C901.1.7.* Taboo: taboo imposed by mother.
C920 Death for breaking taboo.
D170 Transformation: man to fish.
D665.4.* Transformation of rival to get rid of her.
Transformed mother suckles child.
Disenchanted by application of blood.
Magic hair.
Magic egg.
Magic box.
Magic drum.
Marvelous jumper.
Prodigious jump.
Egg becomes crowing cock.
Person falls into ogre's power.
Child's play with red flowers allows demon to kill its mother.
Ogre imprisons victim in drum.
Recognition of transformed person (animal).
Mother transformed to animal recognized by her breast milk.
Test of paternity.
Test of paternity: if elephant's tusk does not fall out when run around by girl.
Child seeks unknown father.
Quest for bride.
True bride transformed by false.
Reinstatement of true bride.
Treasure set afloat in river.
Wife brought home to live with in-laws.
Daughter lures transformed mother home.
Daughter warns father.
Daughter warns father that his wife is a transformed demon.
Sister and brother.
Sister takes care of brother.
Rescue of captive.
Rescue of captives in demon's drum.
Miraculous conception.
Conception from drinking.
Conception from drinking elephant's urine (Jfr. B631.9.* above!).

Bibliography


Review

J.S. Furnivall's The Fashioning of Leviathan
Garry Woodard


As he pursued his diligent path round South and Southeast Asia in the 1950s Australian Foreign Minister Richard Gardiner Casey was wont to ask his "friends and neighbours" whether they considered their newly-independent countries had benefitted from colonial rule. Amongst those whom he records as replying in the affirmative (and in his case without the "don't quote me" caveat Casey met in the Philippines) perhaps the most surprising is Burmese politician (and Deputy Prime Minister) U Kyaw Nyein.

Readers of Orwell and Collis, who would judge that this reply contains a fair dash of telling the Anglophile ex-Governor of Bengal what he wanted to hear, will have their thoughts on the subject stimulated by reading this largely fascinating account of British administration of Tennasserim in the first twenty years of Britain's spasmodic conquest of Burma.

The story is the familiar one (but set in an unfamiliar location) of the inexorable assertion of arbitrary control and stultifying uniformity by the distant, foreign-based, bureaucratic juggernaut over a string and chewing gum administration which had been ingenious in adapting to local custom and few resources.

It ends before the usual next step in the downward spiral, the arrival of the military and colonial wife (on which subject W.K. Hancock lamented in a letter of 10 June 1943 to Sir Frederic Eggleston that "the life of most of these women is unbearably aimless and arid and they are a drain on the idealism and adventure of their husbands", who then "want to get away from life to office work, and particularly office work at the secretariat in the capital, where the poor little amusements and promotions are to be enjoyed and intrigued for").

The two English administrators, Maingy and Blundell, are imaginatively reconstructed from their routine reports and apparently despite a paucity of biographical material. If they smack a little of stereotypes, the first a portly Pollyanna and natural bachelor, who had the good fortune to be largely left alone, his protege and successor a more intense, waspish and intellectual personality proficient in the local language and hyper-sensitive to being second-guessed from afar, they nevertheless well serve Furnivall's purposes. One likes to think that, writing in 1939, as follows, he sensed the revolutionary change which War and Aung San were soon to bring: Not until Leviathan (Britain's 'Heaven-born' Empire) is dead is he so far levelled with the common run of mortals that you can say what you like about him; while he
still lives, you must say what HE likes, on pain of incurring his resentment, and perhaps a prosecution for lese-majesty.

"Leviathan is a creature of the Law", Furnivall begins his substantive analysis of the British impact on Burma. Commerce, and the multiplication of foreign traders, necessitates Law, which comes to over-ride customary law and, in Tennasserim, Maingy's imaginative use of the jury system. It introduces an alien caste of expatriate lawyers. General Ne Win's attempts to replace this with something indigenous has been vitiated by the essential arbitrariness of military authoritarianism and by the need to try to fit it into the arcane mould of The Burmese Way to Socialism. But when Burma becomes a democracy, not the least difficult task for the Government will be to introduce a legal system which provides predictability to the foreign trader, protection to minorities and dissenters, and comfort to the Burman.

Dr Gehan Wijeyewardene is right to claim that the reviving scholarly I would add, not only scholarly interest in Burma justifies this delightful and attractively presented reprint.

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Manerplaw's Federal University
An Experiment in Ethnic Harmony in the Midst of Revolution

Kevin Heppner

Manerplaw, in the ethnic Karen controlled territory of Burma adjacent to the Thai border, is basically a military camp. It is the headquarters of the Karen government and army, which have been at war with successive Burmese regimes for over forty three years. It is also the headquarters of several other armed and unarmed organisations and alliances devoted to overthrowing the Rangoon junta. Its rough buildings of teak and bamboo roofed with leaves, set among mountains in tropical monsoon forest famous for malaria, lead foreign journalists to romanticise it as a 'rugged, impregnable rebel guerilla fortress'. And yet Manerplaw is also home to its own University.

Admittedly, Federal University doesn't bear much resemblance to the venerable halls of Oxford. At first glance its cluster of bamboo-and-leaf classrooms and dormitories surrounding a dusty courtyard look more like a tribal village compound. But that never took away from its significance, as a place where students from ethnic revolutionary movements all over Burma could come to continue their struggle and their education, and at the same time learn to live with each other.

To understand the concept of Federal University, it is first necessary to understand the situation that created it. What is now known as Burma was a British colony from the 19th century until World War Two. Its estimated 43 million people are 70% ethnic Burman, living mainly in the central lowland river basins, and 30% divided between about 200 diverse ethnic groups who inhabit the higher regions towards all the borders as well as the Irrawaddy Delta. Some of the larger groups are the Karen, Kachin, Mon, Shan, Arakan, Chin, Pa'oh,
Palaung, and Karenni. These groups have traditionally suffered varying degrees of domination by the Burmans.

During WW2, in order to get rid of the British, many Burmans fought for the Japanese, while some of the minorities, particularly the Karen and Kachin, fought for the British, even continuing to fight the Japanese after the British had pulled out. In return for this the British showered them with promises of independence from the Burmans after the war. When the war ended and the British returned, the Burmans continued to fight them and eventually won their independence. But in granting it, the British suddenly forgot all their promises to the minorities and fled the scene. There was still some hope: General Aung San, leader of the Burma Independence Army, promised a Federal Union where the minorities would have autonomy. But he was assassinated in 1947 and when full independence came on January 4, 1948, those who held power established parliamentary democracy but refused the minorities any autonomy. Denied their identity and any chance of self-determination, in 1949 the ethnic minorities, one by one, began to take up arms. Today there are well over a dozen separate ethnic armies fighting the regime, and the Karen, Karenni, and Mon have been at it non-stop for forty three years.

Through all this time, the 'rebel guerrilla' ethnic groups have maintained their own Liberated Areas with well-organised governments, efficiently trained armies, and even some functioning school and health systems. In 1976, many of these groups formed an alliance called the NDF (National Democratic Front), with the stated aims of overthrowing the dictatorship, ending the civil war, and setting up a federal union of autonomous states where democracy and human rights would be entrenched. After 1988, when Burman students, monks, and other dissidents fled to the Liberated Areas, the NDF further allied itself with these groups to form the DAB (Democratic Alliance of Burma). Much of the population of the country now shares a common political priority: to get rid of the SLORC.

It was the NDF, the alliance of ethnic minorities, that created Federal University. During a 1987 visit to Europe to spread information about Burma, Chairman Brang Seng of the Kachin Independence Organisation, was offered an educational program by the West German government. They offered support for sixty five students from Liberated Areas to come and study at German universities. When Brang Seng reported this to the NDF, they sent out messages to all their member groups throughout Burma to send a few of their most promising students to Manerplaw. But as soon as Ne Win's junta caught wind of the project, they openly condemned the German government, and the Germans backed out.

The project was then picked up by a German NGO; but they immediately ran into problems. Without the weight of a government behind it, the NGO couldn't solve the students' passport problems. Being from revolutionary areas not recognised by any foreign power, there is no government willing to grant passports to these people. Although special permission could probably have been arranged to enter West Germany, the main problem was not getting in to Germany but getting out of Burma through Thailand, the only feasible route. While Thai passports can occasionally be arranged for individuals from revolutionary areas, the scale of bribes that would be necessary to get fifty or sixty students out through Thailand was completely out of reach.

Meanwhile, the ethnic revolutionary groups had received the NDF's message,
selected and contacted students, and the students had set out on the perilous journey to Manerplaw. Some, such as the Kachin students, were just finishing high school when the SLORC army torched their schools and villages; others had finished high school and had already been active within their organisation for a few years; others had partly completed degrees at Burmese universities before having to flee to the Liberated Areas to avoid arrest and torture for their dissident activities and participation in demonstrations. Now they were converging on Manerplaw from the farthest corners of the country.

The Liberated Areas of Burma form a ring along all of its outside borders, mostly in mountainous regions thick with forest. To reach Manerplaw, most of the students had to travel long distances on foot through these areas, usually along with armed units of various groups, facing the constant possibility of encountering SLORC troops. The five Kachin students spent eight months crossing Kachin and Shan states on foot, being passed from one revolutionary group to the next. The Palaung and Shan students had similar journeys, and some had to pass covertly through western China on the way. The Arakan students spent a dangerous month travelling secretly across central Burma, then hiking across the Dawna mountains into Karen territory. And none of them were quite sure what they were heading for, other than some vague idea of further study, possibly at a University overseas. They knew nothing of the NDF's passport dilemma.

The NDF and the German NGO, up against a wall, had decided they would have to shelve their hopes of overseas study for the moment, but they remained determined to set up something for the students. They resolved on the offbeat idea of using some of the funding to set up a university in Manerplaw itself, and Federal University was born. It was set up with the following objectives:

1. To nurture the spirit of a Federal Union
2. To promote unity, harmony, and friendly relations among ethnic groups
3. To establish a common perspective on the future Union
4. To increase the students' power of thought
5. To exchange culture and civilisation.

The primary emphasis was to be on unity and harmony between the different ethnic groups, an ambitious experiment considering that several of the groups were traditional enemies. But when the students first came together, thirty seven of them representing ten different ethnic groups (Karen, Mon, Kachin, Karennis, Pa'oh, Palaung, Arakan, Shan, Lahu, and Wa) and four Burmans from the All-Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), a revolutionary group of students who fled to Liberated Areas after the 1988 massacres, there were other things to concentrate on rather than old enmities. First they had to turn an empty clearing on a hill in Manerplaw into something they could call a University.

This is probably one of the few universities in the world where the students had to build their own classrooms and forms before they could even start studying. This was their first job together, and when they'd finished they had a classroom, a dorm, a teacher's hut and a canteen surrounding the courtyard, all built of bamboo roofed with leaves. The dorm was set up to force a communal atmosphere; like a longhouse with a walkway down the centre, each student having a slot wide enough for a sleeping mat, a few books and a pile of clothes. These piles of belongings were the only walls in the place. Everyone moved in, and Federal University began its first six-month term in May 1990.
Although the funding was sufficient to keep rice in everyone's stomachs, it stopped well short of being able to pay a complete faculty, or a single lecturer for that matter. In fact, there was no money to pay the faculty any salary beyond rice twice a day, a bed of bamboo, and some cash for interim costs. Working in Manerplaw is not for the money-conscious, or as the local Karen say, 'Everyone is a volunteer in our Revolution'. What was needed was someone who was a great teacher and motivator, yet was willing to work hard under unusual conditions simply for the friendship, the challenge, and the feeling of being a part of something worthwhile. And fortunately, just the right person turned up at just the right time.

Jennifer from Canada became synonymous with the University in the minds of many, carrying it through that first rainy season and beyond, the lone faculty member for the first six months. Not that this was a lonely position being part of Federal University was like being part of a family, whether teacher or student, and 'Canadian' just fit into the mosaic, one more ethnic group to take part in the general cultural exchange. Of course, only having one teacher didn't allow for a huge and varied curriculum. In line with Jennifer's background teaching English as a second language, the initial emphasis was on studying English, with a view to overseas study and also as a gateway to English learning materials in many other subjects. Very few good textbooks are printed in Burmese or ethnic minority languages.

But beyond the core subjects, there were also scheduled sessions on ethnic issues, current world events, and other interests, even traditional folk tales. Students were already being encouraged to run these sessions themselves. Jennifer's work was eventually augmented by four other volunteer teachers who came for periods of several months each. None of us were affiliated with any outside organisations, but all were university graduates who believed in the goals of Federal University as formulated by the NDF.

The students, teachers, and the NDF were constantly consulting with each other to find ways to improve the program, and through the hard work and versatility of everyone involved it gradually expanded. In the second six month term the daily schedule included English, Maths/Statistics, Economics, and Thai, as well as the continuing current events and cultural sessions, and special interest groups students could sign up for, such as political geography, creative writing, and music, among others. This program was supported by a small (two or three bookcases) library which had gradually been accumulated from various charitable groups, and a somewhat irregular supply of newspapers and current affairs magazines. Weekly lectures were given by leaders of the Karen, Mon, Karenni, Kachin, Pa'oh, and other ethnic movements, as well as leaders of the Burmese students' and Burmese monks' organisations and others involved in the struggle against SLORC. Special talks and longer seminars were given by visiting experts on federalism, constitutions, the environment, and other subjects. Well known journalists visiting Manerplaw gave talks on the workings of the media and the world view of Burma. Although the University's funding couldn't pay for such people to come, the NDF, teachers, and students became adept at 'nabbing' them on their way through Manerplaw. Once they were shown what the University was about, they were usually more than happy to be a part of it.

The students were now studying a curriculum available nowhere else in Burma. Not only had the junta kept all Universities and high schools closed to stifle
student opposition since the uprisings in 1988, but even when Burmese universities had been open, their students had never had what the Federal University students thrived on: learning based on freedom of thought, and not only the opportunity but the encouragement to freely discuss the politics of Burma and the world.

Of course, in subjects such as Maths and English the levels of the students varied widely. Some had previously been studying to be engineers, while others had just finished the jungle high schools in Liberated Areas. Some were beginners at English while others were already proficient. So in the core subjects classes were divided into three levels. The special lectures by Burmese or ethnic nationals were generally given in Burmese, the lingua franca of the University. For any complex sessions that were in English, the more proficient students worked as translators. Meanwhile, students of all levels took turns as 'facilitators': a sort of Master of Ceremonies present in every special session, organising the agenda and practising their English by presiding over events. In all such sessions, the regular teachers became spectators.

This sort of self-administration was considered part of the learning process at the University. Working groups, set up deliberately to cross ethnic lines, rotated duties such as cooking, cleaning, carrying water and repairing buildings. The division of work between the groups, arranging and obtaining school and food supplies, and other such day-to-day issues, were discussed at weekly students meetings chaired by a leader the students elected monthly from among themselves. Meanwhile, the overall running of the university and funding decisions were handled by a NDF committee, with one NDF representative appointed as 'headmaster' to keep a daily eye on things.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without students who were highly motivated and determined. They had already proven these qualities just by making it to Manerplaw, and by building and helping to run their own University they felt a great commitment to it. As is the custom in this part of the world, they also felt a great commitment to their teachers, and were constantly making us feel guilty for all the special attention we received, until we learned it was easier just to accept it without complaining. The students fixed the leaks above our beds, walked into Manerplaw with our messages and nursed us back to health when we were sick. Often when we were asking about one of the wonderful little specialties of ethnic cuisine they often cooked up, we'd notice that the students down the table weren't sharing in it. But our grumbling about 'special treatment' was met with 'If a student gets sick he just misses a few classes. But we must keep our teachers strong and healthy, or all classes will stop.' The students invariably managed to paralyse our objections with such tidbits of unarguable logic.

Federal University had become its own little buzzing community. By 1991 the student body had grown to fifty two, although the Burmese students had left, stating a commitment to shorter term education programs and armed struggle. There were now two classrooms, and two dorms which were constantly sending out the ring of guitars and voices onto the breeze. The little Karen teashop down the hill was thriving on the clusters of students taking a break to talk, and the teachers' hut was like a drop-in centre where students popped in and out to chat about anything from English homework to world affairs while sitting on the bamboo floor sipping Chinese tea. The open warmth and honesty of these people contains many lessons for our stuck-up, hung-up Western world.
The experiment in ethnic harmony was an unqualified success. Friendships which had initially stayed within ethnic boundaries had given way to clusters of friends which crossed all ethnic lines. There was still one time when ethnic lines were kept: during bonfire parties in the courtyard, when special visitors were treated to traditional music and dancing by the students of each ethnic group. Teachers and the visitors themselves were never exempt, and were cheered on to perform a bit of their own 'traditional music'. after all, visitors were always seen as a great chance for cultural and information exchange. Some of the most warmly received visitors were a group of eight Japanese university students, who were seen as 'our overseas brothers and sisters'. The swapping of stories and expressions of solidarity went on well into the night.

But all this was not without constant reminders of where we were. Manerplaw is one of the worst malarial areas of all Southeast Asia, and despite all precautions no one can stay completely clear of it. To compound the problem, the students were always short of mosquito nets. In one month alone, April 1991, a Chin doctor who had 'adopted' us recorded ninety cases of malaria among fifty two students and three teachers. Most of this is a form of P. falciparum malaria which is resistant to most drugs and can kill. Many villagers and soldiers nearby still die of malaria, although the disease doesn't cause the panic it does in Western doctors. A strong course of quinine usually puts people back on their feet in a week, and it's generally regarded with little more anxiety than a case of stomach flu. In Manerplaw, malaria and the additional threats of dysentery and hepatitis are looked on simply as the price of residence. They can, however, play havoc with class attendance at times.

The SLORC regime is looked on somewhat more seriously. Sometimes I knew a student for weeks before the conversation came around to families and life histories. And suddenly a warm, cheerful friend would be telling me of murdered relatives, a torn apart family, friends swept away in the night or massacred in peaceful street demonstrations, of themselves running from trigger-mad soldiers through the streets of the city or the ricefields of the village. Most of the students haven't been able to communicate with their families for two or three years, for fear of putting their families in danger of SLORC reprisals. Their parents don't know for sure where they are, or even if they're alive. For their families' sakes, they even had to ask me not to use their names in this story. It's almost impossible to find anyone who hasn't directly suffered at the hands of SLORC and its predecessors. A Karen student tells me how his mother was shot and killed by a SLORC patrol while sitting in a passenger boat going up a river. The headmaster from Mon state describes his nine years in one of Ne Win's political prisons; he ends by saying 'In a way I'm grateful to him: while in his prison I reaffirmed my commitment to Buddhism.'

Manerplaw itself, a hotbed of opposition, is a major target of SLORC's army. During their dry season offensive in March 1991, the University ground to a halt for a week as the sound of nearby shelling became like thunder all day long. Nobody could concentrate. The students, many of whom grew up with this, were calling out the shells from the sound as they exploded: 'That was a 120'. 'Eighty-one'. Everyone ran outside whenever SLORC attack planes came in sight over the ridge. Everyone was packed to evacuate, and the students were considering whether they'd be called to support the Karen army in their defence. Those of us who hadn't grown up in war zones just tried to occupy our minds with other things and asked the students for advice. But as quickly as it had
started, the Karen pushed the enemy back. Things returned to normal - but yet again, we'd all be reminded where we were.

Like the students, none of the teachers escaped repeated attacks of malaria, and occasionally dysentery. And the threat of enemy attack may make Manerplaw sound an insane place for anyone to stay willingly. Yet I think the other teachers, particularly Jennifer who had the greatest investment and commitment to the project, would agree with me in calling it one of the most satisfying times of our lives. Progress towards the University's goals was visible every day, and no one was more cognisant and appreciative of this than the students themselves. Their greatly increased understanding of their compatriots throughout Burma, and of the world in general, gives them the beginnings of a greater potential to help guide their peoples into the future. There was no sense of self-sacrifice in teaching at Federal University: the warm, easy friendships we formed, the feeling of learning more than you could ever teach, and of being part of a unique forum of freedom within Burma, made sure of that. The rewards of being there were as fulfilling as they were intangible. That's what kept the teachers and students going through 14-hour days, crouched over a typewriter with a candle stuck on it at midnight.

The second six-month term ended in late May 1991 with a whooping closing ceremony and plans to reopen in two months. The initial funding had only been set up for one year and had to be rearranged, the program was to be enhanced, and some new students were supposed to come, including an increase in the proportion of women from a far too meagre three out of fifty-two. But the funding bogged down in a bureaucratic tangle, and as I write ten months later the University remains closed. The classrooms and dorms have been reclaimed by the jungle, while universities in central Burma have been reopened under strict martial restrictions, only to be reclosed as soon as students demonstrated in support of Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize. Rumour has it now that Federal University's funding may be able to come forth again, and the NDF hopes to reopen at the start of rainy season in June, with a multi-year program funded term by term. It would be more varied, including such programs as political science, agriculture, and health care, taught in Burmese and English mainly by locally available minority and Burman nationals to sixty or more students.

But this season, desperate to take Manerplaw, the SLORC has launched the biggest offensive in twenty years. There is constant shelling nearby and regular air attacks. Thousands of civilians have been displaced, bringing with them countless reports of the atrocities of SLORC's army. The Karen and others are throwing every last drop of sweat and blood into their defence, and although all the Revolutions would continue with or without Manerplaw, nothing there is certain now. The other day, an artillery shell landed in the old University courtyard.

I recently went to borrow some textbooks from the University's supply. A former Arakan student, now working for the NDF, led me down to a bunker dug out of the dirt of the hillside where they're kept, many already half-eaten by mould and mildew, waiting to be opened again. This student, and the others who are still around Manerplaw, tell me that they're still hoping for further education, still dreaming of that University overseas. But they're caught in the middle, people without passports in a world that will only recognise the genocidal junta they're fighting against as the legitimate government of their country. And, I reflect sadly, their unlimited potential is now sitting idle in the jungle,
while the war rages on and the outside world refuses to care.

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Letters

Jinny St. Goar of New York writes:
Recently I read the June 1991 issue with great interest. Having done some research on the history of the Chinese road through Muang Sing in the '60s and '70s I am curious to learn more about recent developments in the region and suspect that conditions might have even changed there in the last 6-9 months. Would you have more details?

[According to information obtained by the Editor during a trip to the Lao PDR in mid-November last year, Chinese-supported work was underway either extending or mending the road through Muang Sing. Other readers of the Newsletter may have more up to date information on this subject.]

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From Allen Wittenborn:
I continue to marvel at the wealth of information found in the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter. It is truly an exceptionally rich source of material that, as far as I know is found nowhere else. My only problem is that I am becoming too dependent on it. Let us hope that it never ends. ...[I]n the article on "Building the Yunnan-Burma Railroad through Western Yunnan" by Chang Yin-tang [TYP Newsletter Number 7, December 1989], there is a reference to "the Burma-Cambodia-Yunnan border area". I wonder if the translator mistook Cambodia for Laos, otherwise we are faced with a very strange border, indeed, unless there has been a good deal of tectonic shifting since 1943. Can you verify this? Once again, congratulations on a superb publication.

[The Thai-Yunnan Project having lost its funding for translators, as well as its office space, it is very difficult to check our old records. However the border area named in the article was very likely a slip of the pen on the translator's part, rather than an example of continental, or even cognitive, drift.

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New Books and Articles


Enquiries to The Publications Officer, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash
Palm-leaf Manuscript Dictionary.
This new dictionary includes all Kham Mu'ang words found in palm-leaf manuscripts. Each word is entered in Tai Yuan script with its phonetic equivalent and translation into Central Thai and English. Examples are given and each entry includes the root of the word and references to the texts where it may be found. This new dictionary is a project supported by the Toyota Foundation, with Aroonrut Wichienkeo as head of project, and Dr Prasert Na Nagara and Dr Udom Rungruangrsri as advisors. The dictionary is due to be released this year.

A Dictionary of Northern Thai Dialects.
The staff of Chiangmai Teachers College and Chiangmai Cultural Centre are working on a new dictionary of Northern Thai dialects. It contains the Kham Mu'ang entry, a phonetic transcription, the meaning in Central Thai and, it is hoped, an English translation. This new dictionary is subsidised by the National Cultural Committee of Thailand and is being carried out under the direction of Aroonrut Wichienkeo. It will be released in 1993.


'This volume contains a detailed description of hunting, trapping and fishing in a traditional Kammu village in Northern Laos... The traps and other utensils are depicted in drawings that clearly show their functions. Rites and taboos pertaining to the work are described and the text of magic formulas are given in Kammu with interlinear translation...'


The paper surveys the legal literature of Buddhist Southeast Asia dividing it into three regions: 1. Western Ramannadesa, Burma and Arakan; 2. Eastern Siam and Cambodia; and 3. Northern Lan Na, Laos, the Shan States, Kengtung and Sipsongpanna.

Exhibition
The Department of Anthropology, Arizona State University, Tempe, have announced the opening of a new exhibition in the Museum of Anthropology. The following details are abstracted from notes supplied by the organisers:

'Under the White Parasol: Cultural Diversity in Laos'
The exhibition consists of a collection of complete costumes from twelve ethnic groups of Laos, as well as household and religious articles, musical instruments, and colour photographs of Laotian people and places. The exhibit illustrates ways that groups express ethnic differences through language, craft
production and dress, contrasting with ways they interact through multilingualism, trade relations, adoption, intermarriage and shared rituals.

Exhibits are from the collection of Lao ethnographica donated to the Arizona State University by William Sage. They were acquired during the period from 1969 to 1975 when he worked on educational development projects in Laos. The collection was previously exhibited from 1983-85 at the Ethnographic Museum of Sweden in Stockholm.

The Museum's Laotian advisory group will train teenage members of their community to guide scheduled tours through the exhibit, an activity which parent-trainers will also serve as a way of teaching children about their past. A special photo album will be assembled by members of the Laotian community, reflecting experiences of Laotian life in Arizona since 1975.

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a lecture series during April. Speakers include Amy Catlin, Carol Compton, Charles Keyes and Juliane Schroeder on a range of topics such as Laotian dance and music, courtship and marriage, ethnic relations and Theravada Buddhism. There will also be a performance by Kesara Vilai.

Further information: Department of Anthropology, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85287-2402, phone (606) 965-6213.

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Conferences
SEALS II
Southeast Asian Linguistics Society
May 13-16 1992
Arizona State University, Tempe

The conference will consist of a General Session and a Parasession:
General Session
The main session will cover all areas of descriptive or theoretical interest with regard to Southeast Asian languages. The general session will be held from Thursday, May 14 until early afternoon Saturday, May 16. Invited speakers include Robert Blust, University of Hawaii, who will discuss phonological changes in Austronesian which parallel ones found in Tibeto-Burman, thus bridging mainland and island Southeast Asia.

Parasession: Issues of Pedagogy.
The parasession will address issues of pedagogical interest. Topics are aimed at meeting the needs of ESL and classroom teachers in the USA with students of Southeast Asia origin. The parasession will be held Wednesday, May 13 1992, from 8.30  4.30.

For further information regarding format for papers and publication of proceedings contact:
Karen Adams, Thomas Hudak and Juliane Schober (Conference Co-Chairs), Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-3101.
[Phone 602-965-4232; Fax 602-965-2012; E-mail ATKLA@ASUACAD.bitnet]

* Symposia:
Laos: Cultural Crossroads of Asia
July 25-26
University of Washington
For details contact Prof. Charles Keyes, Director, Southeast Asian Studies DR-05
303 Thomson Hall, Seattle, WA 98195
Telephone: (206) 543-9606
Fax: (206) 685-0668
*
The Northwest Regional Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies
Fifth Annual Conference
'Development, Environment, Community and the Role of the State'
to be held at The University of British Columbia
October 16-18 1992
The Conference welcomes papers on any subject in historical and contemporary
Southeast Asia.

Contact: Geoff Hainsworth, Conference Convenor, Centre for Southeast Asian
Studies, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver,
BC, Canada V6T 1Z2.
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Contributions, preferably on Disk, may also be mailed direct to the Editor, at:
CHRTU, Department of General Practice, UWA, Nedlands, Western Australia 6009.
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1 I am grateful to Mr Niti Pawakapan, who is currently doing field research in
Khun Yuam, for introduction to this region.
*This article appeared in Thai in Mang Boran April-June 2534 (1991) and is
translated with the author's permission. Acharn Thawi's address is 9/2 Soi Soon
Vichai, New Petchburi Rd., Bangkok 10310.
1The author spells the name in Thai fashion and this transliteration will be
used throughout.
2The town on the Burmese side opposite Mae Sai.
3This refers to the remnants of the swamp left within the city, and the author
uses the one word throughout. 'Swamp' seems inappropriate in English, in this
context.
4Early this year it was reported that the palace was demolished on the orders of
SLORC and is to be replaced by a condominium.
5The author donated over a thousand manuscripts, palm leaf and sa, in Tai Khoen
to the University of Chiangmai to be placed in a special room to be known as the
Thawi Swangpanyangkoon Room, but now the officer in charge has changed and I
have no idea as to what has happened to the manuscripts.
1 This article, written for the Encyclopaedia of the Thai Royal Institute, is translated and published here at the author's request. Only Thai sources have been used. For a discussion of other sources see Christian Bauer 'Language and ethnicity: the Mon in Burma and Thailand' in Ethnic groups across national boundaries in mainland Southeast Asia ed. Gehan Wijeyewardene, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies 1990:14-47.

2 This term and the term 'urban society' used below are in English in the original. The usage comes from Srisak (see references). In the translator's view these terms are inappropriate. The reference is to a period when local communities were not, or only minimally, integrated into larger political units, contrasted with the emergence of the mang as a political unit essentially where one chief assumed control over all communities within a mountain-girded river valley.

3 For the significance of the flood in northern Thai genealogies see Michael Vickery 'The Lion Prince and related remarks on northern history' JSS 64 (1), 1976: 326-77.

1 This is verified by Damrong Tayanin who found no difficulty whatever in transcribing the texts from the recordings. Tayanin's mother tongue is the Yan dialect spoken in northern Laos.

2 Lun indicates that the girl is the youngest daughter in her family. Kaa comes from the Kammu name of the village Maa Kaa.

3 We are particularly glad to be able to present stories told by a lady teller, since we have managed to record few stories told by women.

4 Naa is a common designation for girls.

5 This comes prematurely, since the elephant father continues to instruct her.

6 Later it becomes clear that it is the box she is to set afloat.

7 The story is very confused here.

8 Naa K Kw has not yet met her parents-in-law. Now they are to return to the groom's father's house, to let Naa K Kw take up her duties as daughter-in-law.

9 The teller forgets that it is the sister and not the mother that is carrying the baby.

10 This should of course be 'your'.

11 The husband continues to treat the demon woman as if she were his real wife until the moment he is able to kill her.

1 Political Science, Melbourne University.

end of file