Deconstructing Tai (Thai) ethnicity
Seminar Report1

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The Thai-Yunnan Project held a one-day seminar on 30 August 1994 on the above topic. Professor Charles Keyes (University of Washington) was visiting Canberra and we were very glad to be able to take advantage of his presence. We were also fortunate that Dr Grant Evans (Hong Kong University) was able to attend. Many scholars from other Australian universities also attended and helped make the seminar a most successful occasion. This, of course, is the latest of a series of seminars conducted by the Project and we hope the tradition can be continued.

Charles Keyes began by pointing out that Anthropological discourse about 'ethnicity' is very recent and goes back only to the 1960s. The substantive debate in Thailand he traced to a series of articles in Silpawatthanatham on the topic 'Who are the Thai?' which goes back about nine years, and has to do with the ways in which the 'Thai' think and talk about the 'Tai'. Ethnicity is a cultural construct of the notion of descent, but like 'nationalism' is a modern phenomenon. 'Thai' is a construct of the emergence of the nation state of Siam-Thailand, 'Tai' a creation of colonial officials and missionary scholars who tried to make sense of the cultural diversity and inter-relatedness of the peoples of Southeast Asia and Southern China. In this 'discourse' language and linguistics were privileged in the sense that not only did historical linguistics provide a powerful tool of analysis, it also imposed relationships on Southeast Asian peoples which did not form part of their own thinking. Later in his
presentation, Keyes categorically says that language was not a characteristic used to distinguish people.

Initially the paradigm of Thainess was spatial - those who lived in the territory of Siam - and may be associated with the writing of Prince Damrong. In the 1930s Luang Wichit, taking up the writing of Clifton Dodd, developed a new racial paradigm based on the relationship of Thai-Tai and its civilizing influence. Early questioning of this paradigm resurfaced in the 1980s for three main reasons - the opening of China to Thai, who were now able to see 'Tai' for themselves, the democratizing process which fostered ideas of local autonomy and the aspirations of emerging Thai foreign policy.

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The Silpawatthanatham contributions stress the notion that 'Thai' are those who live here - those who are citizens of Thailand and speak the national language. This last, Keyes suggested, gives a special place to Sino-Thai, many of whom speak only the national language. Finally, he raised the pluralistic implications of thinking about Tai and Thai.

Some scholars, and other Thai, put forward the view that just as there are different kinds of Tai, there are also different kinds of Thai - placing emphasis on the recognition of the autonomy of local groups, local languages and local cultures.

B.J. Terwiel (Hamburg) contested Keyes' implied claim that the racial implications of Thai (or similar categories) did not exist before Luang Wichit. Terwiel suggested that Prince Damrong's use of such terms as 'Lao' did have such connotations. Keyes replied that by the time Prince Damrong was writing Western notions of race were already known and that these are specifically rejected by Prince Damrong. Traditional Southeast Asian use of such terms did not have that 'essentializing' character.

Grant Evans introduced his paper by distinguishing the 'Sinicized Tai' from the 'Sino-Thai'. 'Tai-ization', a concept discussed by Condominas in recent years, has perhaps its most successful manifestation in Bangkok - the Sino-Thai. The Sinicized Tai, however, refer to Tai-speaking groups in southern China, e.g. the Zhuang, and in northern Vietnam. One of the important facts about these people is that they are non-Theravada Buddhist Tai. Agreeing with Keyes that the characterization of these people as 'Tai' is largely a linguistic invention, he raised the question as to what extent these people may be called 'Tai'.

Again, agreeing with Keyes, as to the importance of Clifton Dodd and
other scholars in the construction of 'Tainess', he also pointed to a 'contradictory discourse' between the recognition of ethnicity as 'a cultural construct of the recognition of descent' and the primordial search for origins. Also, the existential power of the idea of descent is very much stronger in societies like that of southern China than in others. Ideas such as the modern Thai chaat occur at the level of state ideology while comparable south Chinese ideas occur at the level of family and kinship.

Origins acts as a charter myth of modern nationalism. This again, in the Thai case creates a tension in discourse - the Thai are in Thailand, but their origins are generally traced outside Thailand. One consequence of this is the attempt to see the Black Tai of Vietnam as representing 'original Tai'. Paradoxically Henri Maspero, discussing Chinese religion has chapters on the Black and White Tai as an indication of the nature of the ancient Chinese peasant.

Evans suggested that given this search for origins, we may ask the question what would an original Tai culture have looked like? Given contacts with Chinese civilization the written records in Chinese, of the Tai, go further back than any Tai (Thai) records. In this context, have the Tai ever not been Sinicized? In the context of the spread of the Chinese empire the process of sinicization was ununiform, but pervasive. Three points of the presentation here need to be noted. First, following Professor Woody Watson, one could point to an 'orthopraxy' - a basic similarity of ritual practice within which cultural variation could take place. Second, certain practices, such as in administration, were imposed from the centre and became part of cultures such as those of the Tai, even in what is now Vietnam. Third, given the prestige of the central culture, practices were willingly borrowed and one may ask the question are these to be seen as 'Sinicization' or 'indigenization' of borrowed practices?

In raising a number of empirical situations, Evans first took up the case of patronymics, known as sing in Chinese and among the minority groups. These are now of considerable ritual importance and are used among both Tai nobility and commoners as well as by such non-Tai groups as Sing Moon, Lamet and Khmu. Is this to be considered a process of Sinicization?

Zhuang is a category that emerges after the Communist victory in China. Across the border groups are still known as Nung and Tho. In China similar groups are now classified as Zhuang. When the Nationalities Commission interviewed some of these groups, many of them claimed they were Han who spoke Zhuang and had constructed elaborate genealogies to establish their places of origin. This process is being reversed as groups come to reclaim their Zhuang identity.

The Nung in Vietnam present another aspect. The Nung were categorized by the French as Montagnards. When Chinese came across the border in association with the Tai-speaking groups, they too became known as 'Nung', but with no Tai affiliation.
Finally, Evans raised the differential response to Indian influence and Chinese influence on Thai culture. This is largely a function of the privileged position of Theravada Buddhism in the Thai state. These influences are not seen as 'Indian' in contrast to the 'Chinese' influence.

David Holm (Macquarie) began by taking up certain general propositions about the Zhuang - that they are perfectly bilingual and therefore have no difficulty communicating in Chinese and that they are happy to be assimilated and do not present the kind of threat posed by Tibetans, Mongols and Uighurs. However, some Zhuang are only minimally Sinified, not all Zhuang are bilingual and the strategic situation of the Zhuang is changing to something much more fluid.

The Zhuang were not an underprivileged minority in the politics of Guangxi, but in fact made up a substantial part of the leadership of the provincial Communist Party and of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The contemporary revival of Zhuang culture based on the Baeu Rodo manuscripts is also not an ethnic revival for ethnicity's sake but a movement that looks in both directions - towards a Zhuang identity, but also to the Han and the new international order.

A selection of original manuscripts devoted to Baeu Rodo have been revised and printed in Ancient Zhuang Script (gu Zhuang zi), a script in which Chinese characters and modified Chinese characters are used to represent the sounds and morphemes of Zhuang. Holm's concluding comments made quite clear that the creation of a Zhuang identity is a crucial part of this movement, but it has a clear understanding of modern realities. One of the points made is that the region from which many of the myths come is precisely the region of most liberation guerrilla activity and therefore the region from which the communist leaders come.

An interesting aspect of Zhuang turning also to Han is the emergence of verse forms which use a parallel technique of repeating statements, first in Zhuang and then in Zhuangized Chinese. In recent years it has been suggested that a southern dialect, rather than the mid-northern dialect of Wuming, should be made the standard Zhuang language for official purposes, as the southern dialects have more in common with the Tai languages of their neighbours. The provincial leadership see the future with railways running to Rangoon and Bangkok and they are not unaware of Thai interest in Tai and their search for origins and connections outside Thai borders. The Baeu Rodo Ritual Poems was published in Nanning in 1991 with English and Bangkok Thai abstracts. In discussion, Holm pointed out that much of Zhuang views of the outside world, including views about the discipline of anthropology, were coming not from China, Hong Kong or the West, but from Thailand.

Luo Yongxian and Peter Ross (ANU) presented a survey of linguistic self-identification among the Zhuang and Tai-speaking groups in Vietnam. One important point in the discussion was the effects of differences in state policies in the PRC and Vietnam on the phenomena of linguistic identification and self-identification. Charles Keyes pointed out that many of these names appeared to be
Chris Eade (ANU) gave a very dense presentation based on his ongoing work on Southeast Asian inscriptions. He looked at the evidence in inscriptions on the phenomenon of athikamat (Pali adhikamO(a)sa) - the addition of an extra lunar month to keep the lunar and solar years in conjunction. The terms 'Khom', 'Thai' and 'Meng' are used to identify different practices in the choice of month for such duplication, but the question as to whether these terms denoted ethnic identity of some sort is unresolved.

David Bradley (La Trobe) spoke on 'Capture cultures: Tai and others'. He began by taking up the issue of the distinction between the 'Indospheric' and the 'Sinospheric' Tai. The former with Theravada Buddhism and Sanskrit/Pali loan words and the other with surnames, patrilineal descent, Sinitic borrowings and a whole range of non-Theravada religious practices. The 'captured' aspect may be demonstrated in the fact the if we look at Southeast Asia we know that a thousand or two thousand years ago the people of the region had very different 'ethnicities'. The Dvaravati Mon, the Pyu in Burma and the Cham in Vietnam have lost their political ascendancy and are slowly in the process of disappearing. Is there an ethnic template that allows the moulding of ethnicities into another? If there was such a Tai template it would include wet-rice cultivation in valleys and such things as a material culture, political and administrative system based on population rather than territory, and in the case of the Southwestern Tai - Theravada Buddhism.

The forcible movement of population has sometimes resulted in groups maintaining their ethnicity and memory of capture and movement for many hundreds of years though, at the same time 'buying the rest of the package'. Other groups have not been able to maintain linguistic distinctiveness, though they may claim a separate identity. A third example would be the Dvaravati Mons who are totally absorbed in the Thai population except small groups on the 'edges' - the Nyah Kur. One way of 'capturing' populations is through marriage another incorporating them into the administrative structure. Perhaps the Tai (Thai) are better at this process of 'capturing cultures' than others currently in the news.

Anthony Diller (ANU), in a short comment, drew attention to the different interests of anthropologists and linguists. Linguists are concerned about the relationships that exist between certain languages as those which are considered to be part of the Tai linguistic family. The question of what the word 'Tai' might imply politically in some other place and other time is not a linguistic concern. He illustrated this with the feeling among Thai linguists that their anthropological colleagues were attempting to legislate the use of terms because of social and political implications. The linguists' usage is specific and limited in application.

Craig Reynolds (ANU) started with an issue that had arisen in discussion but had not been adequately considered. He drew attention to the fact that the interest in Tai (Thai) ethnicity coincides with a
number of global, regional and national factors. There is the expansion of 'the Sino-Thai social formation based in Bangkok', the global importance of such things as tourism, the opening of the PRC and the end of the security state in Thailand. It is now not only possible for scholars to visit places and see places they could not before, but globalization and regionalization gave a value to such interests.

The search for origins has recently focussed on the Zhuang and this is a statement that here are the 'oldest Tai', before Sukhothai and they are not even within Thailand. It is an intellectual counter to Thai 'state nationalism'. Reynolds closed his comments by raising questions regarding the pluralizing and empowering features of both the interest in ethnicity and its growing hybridization and 'ambidexterity' (the latter picking up a point made by David Holm).

Comment

The success of the seminar was such that the issues that were raised, and as Craig Reynolds showed, those that were not raised, could keep scholars in intense discussion for a very long time. As I saw the seminar proceed I thought I identified three major statements being made. First, Charles Keyes made the clear deconstructionist statement that the phenomenon of identifying certain names as ethnic is recent. Before the nineteenth century identification was not 'ethnic'. It was colonial administrators and missionaries who created the modern notion of ethnicity, privileging language and linguistics in the categorization of peoples.

Following from this was the analysis of the ongoing processes of construction of ethnicity, which Bradley took back into the distant past, and Grant Evans and David Holm considered Tai ethnicity in the context of the state formations of China, Vietnam and Thailand.

Finally, Craig Reynolds took the discussion into the modern and future world, the uses to which the pursuit of ethnicity is put by the 'Sino-Thai social formation based in Bangkok'.

I would like to take a retrograde, essentialist, step and consider 'deconstruction' and the 'essence' of ethnicity. Deconstruction is to me no more than the method of science. Propositions are taken apart and examined. The unsustainable is replaced with a more appropriate hypothesis or theory, or a problem area remains. In any case, all propositions are provisional. Very briefly, it appears to me that this is the strategy that Keyes takes. 'Ethnicity' was not a way in which Southeast Asians identified themselves, they did so on the basis of such things as religious traditions, political affiliation and kinship; not on the basis of groups linguistically defined. The connection between one Tai language and another was not an indication of social connection. As emerged in discussion, Keyes sees a more important connection between Thai and Khmer languages - a relationship based on loan words rather than being genetic.

I think, however, that Keyes is wrong. I have cited before the stanza
from the 16th Century poem, Mangsa rop Chiangmai which refers to thai meng maan chawaa being driven to Hamsawadi from Chiang Mai 'like termites'. Keyes' answer is that we cannot know to what these terms referred. I also refer to an article by Francis Hamilton 'An account of a map of the countries subject to the King of Ava, drawn by a slave of the King's eldest son'. This is based on the author's experience in 1795. He writes:

Nora, or the country of the Kasi Shan was tributary to the King of the Mranmas, but had prices of its own The natives speak a dialect very little different from that of Siam, and call themselves Tay Loun; for the race called Shan by the Mranmas call themselves Tay, and Loun is the specific term for this portion of that extended race. The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal Vol. 2 (?) 1820: 263.

Of course one cannot be certain, but long before Dodd there seems to have been a clear sense of Tai identity.

Construction must always occur. David Bradley's presentation, which all too briefly considered the process of 'becoming Tai', did draw attention to the fact that at any stage of the process the individuals involved are forced by circumstances or by their own volition to make choices between languages, technologies, administrative arrangements. I believe these constructions should not be confused with ethnicity itself. As an analogy we may say that each society constructs its own range of families, but the basic facts of procreation and childbirth continue - even when some families may have nothing to do with either. I would tentatively suggest that 'ethnicity' (and it does not matter that the term only entered sociological discourse in the 1960s) has three components a linguistic one, affiliation to a community and place. In any particular case each of these would have a value. Alternatively I would suggest that 'ethnicity' is a term of convenience to talk about lines of division and fusion. The three features I mention occur more frequently than others.

In a wide-ranging review of recent books on ethnicity and nationalism, Tony Judt writes: 'Nationalist intellectuals may well invent a tradition, but they cannot invent just any tradition - it must fit within some recognizable continuum of distinctive local features' (New York Review May 26, 1994: 46).

The study of the construction and deconstruction of ethnicity has immense fascination as this seminar showed. But it would be wrong to think we are dealing with construction alone. I prefer to think of these phenomena in terms of the analogy of fault lines. Fission may take place along these lines, but sedimentation may also occur. The Thai-Khmer case is an interesting one. Borrowing has established deep linguistic sedimentation. Political hostility to the Vietnamese may have caused a different kind of sedimentation, though the journal Arthit Weekly recently pointed out that 'during the period of the election, at least two parties in Cambodia referred to Thailand as 'the economic beast' and 'robbers of resources' as a means of gaining votes'.
What Price Australian Involvement?

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Doug Miles filed this article from Bangkok as a pseudonymous stringer for the Christian Science Monitor in 1968 during the Vietnam War. He withdrew it before publication within the week when Prince Sihanouk declared the Australian correspondent Dennis Warner, 'Public Enemy Number One' (in English) and had schoolchildren parade with this caption and the villains portrait outside the Australian Embassy. All Australian journalists were expelled from the country anyway.

Siam Reap, 15th August. 'No, monsieur', the Cambodian smiled. 'We Khmer could not aspire for a bulldozer as ransom for an Australian captive. I think the best we could get would be. une bicyclette, non?'

I, the Australian, was the only passenger in a Peugeot taxi honking through the laughing pedestrians and tintinambulating pedicabs of a rural market town some distance from Phnom Penh. An hour before we had heard Prince Sihanouk deliver a speech and the drivers comment alluded to his Highness renewed offer to accept bulldozers in exchange for several captured servicemen who had 'strayed' into Cambodia from Vietnam. The cars buckled skylight had stuck defiantly open to the noon-day sun and my companion had kindly offered me his cap. Half reluctant to deprive him of its protection, I had pointed to the American-style camouflage pattern on the cloth and attempted a jest in Australian school-boy French by way of refusal. 'Maybe the military police will get the wrong idea and arrest me as an American infiltrator from Thailand' (another lead balloon). The Cambodians retort was a successful joke: he kept his cap and I sweated all the way to Angkor Wat.

At the ceremony Norodom Sihanouk, abdicated King and by his own declaration Head of State, had opened the new wing of a country hospital. The royal oration had ranged far beyond the subject of the Khmer successes in rural medicine. A propos of the maternity section, His Majesty had addressed a warning to the protective mothers among his subjects. 'I've told you good ladies before; keep your daughters away from my son and leave me to my other worries'. We had laughed and His Highness had giggled.

As the Prince often tells the diplomats, his talks with the people are like family discussions; occasions when (eyes ablaze) he lets off steam about personal problems and troubles at the office. They are not meant for those with whom he does business. Royal press releases cater for the ambassadors. eg. 'Your lackeys should stay away unless invited'. I hadn't. But in Cambodia, you do not have to take these prohibitions too seriously; you just need to be thick skinned.
I forget how His Highness got onto bulldozers but it was in regard to this topic that he made a few comments about the ticklish task of mediating between him and Washington. His voice soared to the descant of a French alto-tenor. Swinging to confront me he had screeched 'You Australians say you are our friends; but you are also friends of the American imperialists who are perpetrating such heinous crimes in Southeast Asia. The Australians have just sent me a very rude letter accusing us of ignoring their earlier approach for consular access to the American captives. I replied to that request some time ago. I dont quite know where the reply has got to but'. His Majesty added other contemptuous remarks about Australians.

The official transcripts of the speech which reached Phnom Penh embassies a few days later mentioned neither Sihanouks son nor Australia. The same French translations featured in roneoed bulletins which serve as a daily source of local and international news for the Europeans who sip coffee in the cool and quiet of the tree-lined boulevards of the city. As one would expect Cambodia has its Bulletin de l'Agence Khmère de Presse. But the seditious-sounding title of a newer newsheet Le Contre-Gouvernement comes as a surprise.

In 1966 Sihanouk made an appeal to the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, a political party to which all members of the National Congress and Assembly belong. He spoke favourably of such institutions as Britains Loyal Opposition and said that expressions of dissent through underground rumblings were detrimental to Cambodian morale. The Sangkum thereafter published a weekly bulletin headed Le Contre-Gouvernement du SRN for which the Prince himself writes the leading articles. The newsheet deserves as much attention as the AKP which has long been the standard source from which foreign journalists and embassies glean government policies and attitudes.

While Sihanouks speeches were pouring vitriol on Canberra Le Contre-Gouvernement for that week carried articles such as a verbatim copy of a letter which he had just received from his chief of police. A detective had reported to his superior on the case of a certain Sieu Hak. An investigation of the latters house had resulted in the seizure of documents and objects including portraits of Mao Tse Tung and Lenin, French-Chinese dictionaries, one hand grenade and a large quantity of automatic weapons and bullets. Sieu Hak according to Sihanouk is now in jail. Peking can hardly regard the royal editor of the weekly as one of its most loyal henchmen; nor can Hanoi be happy with the cover story of another 1968 issue entitled 'Entre Scarybdis et Scylla'. The article concerns 'Red rebels working for civil war in Cambodia and the destruction of the nation'. It concludes: 'In this world there are two imperialisms. But one has never dared admit to its true colour. The fact is that the Reds are launching devastating blows aimed at the entire collapse of our nation. We must defend ourselves against them in order to survive'.

The following day Khmer National Radio used the designation Pathet Lao for the guerrillas in the north-east of Cambodia who had waylaid government officials. In the last week of August, Sihanouk told an Indian journalist, B.K. Tiwari, that the trouble-makers in the
south-east were 'Vietminh veterans'.

Obviously, the Prince views Cambodias problems in 1968 as the like of those his country faced during the struggle for independence in 1946-1953. At that time there were 20,000 Vietminh on Khmer soil, Pathet Lao were concentrated on the northern frontiers and French troops were moving for a confrontation. The situation might well have doomed Sihanouks seven million subjects to the same future as Vietnam, if the King as symbol of Cambodian authority, had aligned with either of the foreign powers in the showdown which was threatening. Instead, through a series of brilliant political moves, he robbed the French of a cause worth fighting for in Cambodia and the Vietnamese of any appeal their military strength might have otherwise offered to Khmer nationalists. Sihanouk exiled himself to Bangkok; a developing rapprochement between Khmer Freedom Fighters and the Vietminh made it clear to the French that the Kings presence on Phnom Penh would be essential to prevent a take over of Cambodia by the disciples of Ho Chi Minh. He demanded complete autonomy and suzerainty for the Khmer as the price of his return to the capital. The French relented and he thereby snatched from aspiring outsiders all credit for his peoples liberation.

Present-day contrasts between the South Vietnamese and Cambodian capitals (only two hours driving time apart) starkly reveals what independence and non-alignment mean in former French Indo-China. A visit to the two cities makes it easy to understand why Sihanouk gives maximum publicity to his intolerance of persons working for foreign political causes on Cambodian soil. One place is an oasis of tranquility while the most horrendous war in America history rages in the east; the other, a seething cesspool of that combat.

For as long as Hanoi and the NLF hold out against the US in Vietnam, Sihanouk will stamp on any American troops who stray into Khmer territory; while the United States augments its presence in Thailand, the Prince will crush Communist Chinese activities in Phnom Penh, bomb Pathet Lao strongholds in the north from the air and make things as difficult as possible for Cambodias Vietnamese minority. But what of the Future?

Sihanouk undoubtedly sees a possibility of hazardous consequences for the anti-Communist measures his government is taking. Not long ago he made the following observation:

In ten years time there will probably be in Thailand, which always responds to the dominant wind, a pro-Chinese neutralist government, and South Vietnam will certainly be governed by Ho Chi Minh or his successor. Our interests are served by dealing with the camp that will one day dominate the whole of Asia - and by coming to terms before its victory - in order to obtain the best terms possible.

Prince Norodom Sihanouks headache today is that he has never been wrong in his long-range forecasts about Southeast Asian politics. But for how long can he prevent foreign interests from calling the shots in the internal affairs of his kingdom?
Mon Refugees Flee Halockhani Camp

Joanna Hazelton

Unfortunate events have occurred recently at Halockhani Mon refugee camp, situated near Three Pagoda Pass on the Thai-Burma border. Burma's Foreign Minister, Ohn Gyaw, present as a guest of Thailand at the ASEAN Regional Forum, proclaimed that he did 'not believe that Myanmar has a human rights problem'. While less than 24 hours earlier approximately 6,000 Mon refugees fled an attack by the Burmese army on the western section of their camp, Halockhani (situated on the Burmese side of the border).

Briefly, on July 21, at 8.00am, over 100 tatmadaw troops (from Burmese infantry battalion 62) came into Plat Hon Pai village (two kilometres west from the main camp in Halockhani), occupied it, arrested 16 camp leaders, and took 40-50 men to be used as human shields for the planned afternoon attack on the main camp. However, the attack on the main camp was prevented by Mon National Liberation Army soldiers stationed nearby; indeed an ambush took place and the tatmadaw soldiers were prevented from reaching the main Halockhani camp. As the Burmese troops retreated they set fire to Plat Hon Pai village and took 16 men as hostages. It has been reported in a National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) statement issued on July 26 that the attack was due to two possible reasons: a) the Burmese regime, SLORC, dissatisfaction with the New Mon State Party, following the failure of the talks one month before; and b) as part of the common practice of SLORC troops capturing people for service as military porters, human shields on frontlines, or slave labour.

In response the refugees fled across the border, unimpeded, past the Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP), and set up a makeshift camp, dubbed 'New Halockhani', in difficult rainy season conditions (compounded by a situation of increasing diarrhoea, respiratory diseases, vitamin deficiencies; and the ongoing burden of housing hundreds of illegal immigrants repatriated from Immigration Detention Centres in Bangkok and Kanchanaburi). Sheltering on the Thai side became a precarious refuge, however, and during the following several weeks pressures were repeatedly placed upon the refugees by the Thai authorities to return.

Initially, following a meeting with camp leaders and BPP, the refugees were ordered to return to the original Halockhani site by August 10th. But the deadline was defied and they remained on the Thai side. Intercepted messages at the time indicated Burmese army soldiers continued to move closely in the area. The Thai response clearly and adamantly insisted upon the refugees' return. The National Security Council (NSC) deputy chief continued to affirm that when the situation has 'returned to normal' they must return. 'We regard them as illegal immigrants. It is well known that this is Thailand's policy', he stated. After the August 10 deadline had passed the BPP, on orders from the Kanchanaburi-based Royal Thai Army Ninth Division and the...
NSC, blocked the road leading to New Halockhani, effectively cutting them off from the outside world. A blockade was also instituted on delivery of supplies, including water; doctors entering the camp, and journalists. Rice had been stockpiled in preparation for the rainy season.

On August 25, the refugees remained on the Thai side, while the Mon National Relief Committee (MNRC) negotiated with a number of Ninth Division Thai army commanders in Kanchanaburi. MNRC was requested to persuade the Mon to voluntarily repatriate to their former camp. Though the refugees, considering their insecurity, still refused to return. Then on August 31, under command of the Royal Thai Army Ninth Division, the BPP closed the rice store to any people who refused to return across the border. The pressure of hunger became the tool of repatriation. As stated by Kasauh Mon of the MNRC, 'They could not tolerate it any longer. They want to stay on the Thai side ... but they have no choice'. By September 10 all refugees had returned to the former Halockhani site. According to a MNRC September 10 report two officers from the Royal Thai Army Ninth Division met with MNRC chairman, Phra Wongsa Pala, on September 9, and proposed that the Army will lift the blockade from September 15th, again allowing for the access of supplies, aid agencies, government agencies, and journalists. The immediate and wider concerns of these harrowing events have been critically expressed in a large number of settings, including Amnesty International, the UNHCR, NGO's, and Burmese opposition groups around the world.

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The Laughing Nagas of Northern Thailand
Alternate Names

Julie D. Forbush

These alternate names are being collected as Appendix B for a book in preparation, The Laughing Nagas of Northern Thailand.

The book draws attention to two under-utilized historical resources, the palmleaf and leporello books on microfilm at Chiang Mai University, and the timber architecture and arts in the monasteries. The latter show an aesthetic instinct formed much earlier than the memories in the literature of the 1450-1550 era, and so require quite a large vista. Comments will be appreciated, sent to

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A


Ai Fa, King Mangrai's agent: Ayadeva.

ANURUDDHA, Pali spelling for the eleventh-century king in Burma:
Anawrahta (Burmese); Aniruddha (Sanskrit); Anoratha, Anorata, Anawra-hta, Punakaraja, Punakamaraja.

AVA, city near Pagn, source of mica: Angwa, Ratanapura 'City of Gems'.

B

BENARES, sacred city on the Ganges, prime locale in Tai Khn folklore: Varanasi (ancient and present name), Baranasi, Kashi, Kussanavatti.


BLACK RIVER: the De.

BLUE RIVER, Foreigner's name for the Yangtze.

BRAHMAKUMARA, who drove Khmer from the north: Brahm, Phrom, P'rom.

BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER: Aciravati, Karatoya in the eighth-century.

BURENGNONG, sixteenth-century king of Burma: Bayinnaung.

C

CHAI PRAKAN, Brahmakumara's ninth-century city Jayaprakara, Territory of the Left in Yonok (dating derived from chronology in Singhanavati); site overbuilt by Mangrai in 1273 as Fang (middle tone, 'straw') or Kusanagara, now 'Old Fang'. See entry for Fang.

CHAMATEWI, Mon queen of Lamphun late seventh-century: Chamatevi, Camadevi, Cammadevi, Kiam Maha Devi, Cham'tevi, Zammaday-we, Jarmdhwiwongsi.

CHAO, Shan hierarchy: Chao Haw Seng (Lord of Jewelled Palace), Caho Haw Hkam (Lord of Golden Palace), Cahofa/Saohpa (Lord of the Sky), Chao/Sao (Prince), Hkun/Khun (nobleman), Hkam/Kham (semi-royal). Now, anyone can claim to be a Chao, but rarely a higher rank.

CHEDI (Thai): cetiya ('chetiya' in Pali), stupa, sthupa, tope, dagoba, dagaba, pagoda, jedi, zedi (Burmese), candi ('chandi', Indonesian). When enshrining relics: Phra T'at, Pra Dhatu.

CHEDI LUANG: Wat Jotikarama, Rajakuta ('king's ku'), Mahacetiya Luang.

CHET LIN, early Lawa city at foot of Doi Suthep: Vieng Jethapuri.

CHET YOT: Wat Bodhirama ('Bodhi Tree Monastry'), Seven Towers.

CHEUNG: Legendarily powerful Tai king of the twelfth-century: Xun.

CHIANG, major city: Vieng, Wiang, Xieng (French), Kiang (Chinese), Siang (Lao).
CHIANG DAO, mountain north of Chiang Mai: Ang Salong.

CHIANG KHONG: Kharapuri.

CHIANG MAI, combinations with names of cities on the site before Mangrai overbuilt ruins in 1296: Chieng Mai, Keng-Mai, Zimm, Tzimme (Burmese), Babaixifu (Chinese), Lanna Xieng Mai, Maha Nagara Rajadhani Lanna Xieng Mai, Nopburi Sri Nakhon Ping, Nophaburi Sri Ping Xai Xieng Mai, Nabbapuri, Nabisipura, Nabisirajadhani, Meng, Yiwan, Yun, Yn, Raming(ka), Muang Ping, Bingaratha, Bengaratha, Lamaing, La-mng-Tai 'in a country near Chiang Mai named La Bong, Labun, Jiutra, Yiu-tara'.

CHIANG RAI: Chiang Hai, Chiang Lai, Jamraya, Jamrayapura.

CHIANG RUNG, ancient city in Xishuangbanna, Chiang Hung, Xiang Hung, Durgharattha Nagara, Thamuya Nagara, Thamuyya, Alavi, Alawi, Aloubi ('Twelve'), Atiguhyapuri ('City of Mysteries'), Che-Li, Chan Li, Chang Li, Kaing Yung-gyi (Burmese), Ynchinghung.

CHIANG SAEN, present village among ruins inside walls of city built in 1328 over the remnants of the Yonok city Jayasena: Xieng Sen, Kiang Tsen, Kiang Hsen. the original in early AD centuries: Jayanaraya, Jayasenapuri, Chaiburi Nakpan. Later, the name combined with those of the other polity in the region, Mangrai's homeland: Muang Hiran Nakhon Ngeun Yang Chiang Saen (see Ngeun Yang and Yonok).

CHIANG SAEN NOI, improvised capital after the destruction of the original Chiang Saen: Vieng Peuk:sa, still at the Mekong.

CHIANG TUNG: Kengtung, Kemarattha, Tungapuri, Tungkhaburi, Nieu, Menggen, Khn for the Tai Khn people of the area.

CHOM THONG, pilgrimage monastery south of Chiang Mai: Jom Thong.

CH'U, non-Chinese kingdom, central China, 700s to 223 BC: Tch'ou, T'su. (A few scholars wonder if it was Tai).

D

DAMILA: Tamila, Dravidian.

DHAMMA (Pali), Dharma (Sanskrit).

DIEN BIEN PHU: Mang Theng/Thin/Thaeng.

DOI SUTHEP, mountain named for Vasudea, pronounced Wa-Sutape: Ucchubabatto, Usupabatta, Uccigiri, Devapabbata, Succapabatta ('Sugar Cane Mountain').

DOI TUNG, triple-peaked mountain at the Mae Sai River: Doi Sam Sao, Sam Yot, Tayadisa, Mont Ketu, Ketupabatta. The three peaks individually named: Doi Din Deng to the south, Doi Ya Thao (centre) and Doi Tha ('Landing Place') to the north on the river. Another Doi
Tung is a western bulwark for Chiang Rai.

DVARAVATI, Mon polity across the central plains sixth to eleventh centuries AD: Thavaravadi.

E

EMERALD BUDDHA, Palladium of the Kingdom of Thailand: Phra Phut Marakot/Marakata, Jewel Image.

ER-HAI, LAKE: Tali Lake, from the city of Tali (Dali) on its west bank.

F

FANG, present city north of Chiang Mai: (rising tone) meaning 'sappanwood'. Confused with thirteenth-century, long abandoned city a few miles south whose name in Thai is different in meaning and pronunciation, but has to be transliterated the same. See Chai Prakan.

G (Sound usually transliterated as K).

GANDHARA, region in western Pakistan and adjoining Afghanistan, under the Kushan rule in India AD 50-320; pronounced by Iraninans and Parsees as 'Kandahar'; a name nostalgically bestowed upon Yunnan by Buddhist missionaries or Indian emigrs: Kandahar, Gandhalaraj, Gandalarit, Gandhala, Kandar, Karajang, Carajan, Zardandan (west of the Mekong), Vochan, Videharaj.

GAUHATI, ancient city on the Brahmaputra River, a stop on The Great Gold and Silver Road between China and India: Guwahat. In early AD centuries: Kamarupa, Ko-mo-lou, Kia-mo-po.

H*

HAMSA, the white, bar-headed goose, Anser indicus of central Asia and India, vehicle of Brahma, emblem of Mon sovereignty, sculptured in Burma with flat, wide beak: hansa, hong, hongsa (Thai), hantha, hintha (Burmese), snow goose. Not swan, and not to be confused with the Burmese karaweik which has a sharp beak and is a white-breasted water hen, vehicle of Vishnu.

HANOI: Annan-fu, Ke Sho, Thang Long.

HARIPHUNCHAI: Haribunjaya, Haripujaya, Haripoonjai, N-wang (Chinese).

HAW, Mohammedan Chinese: Ho, Panthay, Pansee (Burmese).

HIMAPHAN FOREST, magical retreat: Hemawunta.

HIRANYA, part of name of early capital at the Mae Sai River: Hiraa, Heranya Nakorn, Heraanagara. See Ngeun Yang.
HSENWI, Shan principality in upper Burma: Mng Hsen Wi (Shan), Theinni (Burmese), Kosambi, Kawsampi, Mu-pang (Chinese).

I

INDRA, fierce tutelary god of the Aryans; when mollified by loss of status, the only Aryan deity adopted by Buddhism; the King of the Gods and deus ex machina throughout folklore and northern Thai legends: Inda, Phra In, Praya In, Indahiraja, Intathipatirat (Lao); Sakka, Sakra, Thaga, Thagyamin (Burmese).

ING RIVER: Mae Nom Saita.

IRRAWADDY RIVER: Iraouaddy, Li Shui, Li-chouei, Sri Lohit.

J

JAYASENA, the Yonok city over whose ruins the present Chiang Saen was built in 1328: Jayasanapuri, Jayanaraya Mang Mun Khuen Khua, Jayapuri, Chai Buri.

K

KARENS: Karieng, Kharen, Yang.

KASHGAR, oasis at western end of the Taklamakan Desert and major centre for Silk Road caravans before crossing the Pamirs: Kashi, Kashliih.

KENG TUNG, see Chiang Tung.

KET: Wat Pubbarama, east of Ping River, Chiang Mai; not to be confused with Wat Puppharana-Suan Dauk, or with Wat Buppharam. May have been Wat Sri Saket.

KHMER: K'rom, K'om, Khawm.

KHN, the Tai around Chiang Tung; Hkn, Khoen, Trans-Salween Shan.

KHOTAN, city on the south branch of The Silk Road, Indian in early AD centuries when the pilgrim Fa Hien came through; Hotan, Hotien, Khoten, Yu-teen.

KIEOU-LUNG, legendary youngest of ten "sons of the dragon", founder of a Tai/Ai-lao state, upper Yunnan; a mountain range south of Yung Ch'ang Fu; and one-time name for the Mekong in Xishuangbanna: Kiu-Lung, Chiu-Lung.

KIRTAMUKHA, Indian term for the monster mask sculptured as a guardian over portals/windows of shrines; related to the Chinese T'ao-t'ieh (see). Kala (Dutch), Lion Head, Devouring Time, possibly Rahu.

KOK RIVER: Kukanadi, Kakkanadi.
KU: Archaic northern word for mondop or prasat from Indian guha; when moved indoors, an elegant, prasat-like tower to enclose and safe-guard a Buddha image.

KUKUT, informal name for the square, tiered, pyramidal chedi in Lamphun, often translated as 'Broken Top' because of the decayed pinnacle, but may instead recall the famed Kukutarama (Cock Monastery) of the Buddha's time in India; Lampang originally named Kukkuta.

KUM KAM: Si Kumama. New capital begun by King Mangrai in 1286. Flooding prompted search for Chiang Mai site nearby. 'Kum Kam' is an honourable name in northern Thai speech, but an explicit obscenity in modern Thai; this text uses the legitimate alternate, Si Kumama.

Kumphani, giants at the service of Indra; Kumbhanda.

KUNMING: Kouen-ming, Yunnan-fu, Yunnansen, Mng S Lng (Shan), Chien-ning, I-Chou, Shan-Shan-fu, Mng-Hk or -Ky, Mithila.

KU TAO, the stacked-gourd chedi in Chiang Mai: Gu Tao, Wat Veluvana.

L

Lakhana, northern term; lakshana in the central plains: analysis of personality from physical characteristics.

Lampang: Kukutta Nakorn, perhaps an early Indian colony with name from Kukkutarama, one of the Buddha's favourite retreats; Khelang(ka), Kelangapura, Lambakappa Nagara, Lakhon, Lakon, Lakun, Nakorn Lampang, Sri Nagara Jaya Lakanna Nagara.

Lampang Luang, ancient monastery southwest of Lampang: Lampakappeh, Alambanganapuri.

Lamphun: Lambhanarattha, Labhunja, Lambhuna Nagara, Binga (from the river Ping/Bing which in early AD times was flowing in the present channel of the Khuang River), Bingapuri, Labura, Hariphunjaya.

LAN NA: Jangoma (European), Pa-pe (Chinese).

Lawa, indigenous northerners: Lua, Lavua, Lva, Lwa, Va, Wa, Tamila, Damila (Siam), Lovacs, Milakkha (Pali for 'someone speaking another language', barbarian in the Chinese sense of an outsider). Their country: La:va:rattha, Milakkharattha.


Luang Prabang: Lan Chang, Myang Sua Java, Muong Luang, Muong Chua, Si Satanaganahuta ('hundreds of billions of nagas' per Finot, and other numbers, for elephants also, mythically the same as nagas).
MAE HONG SON: Yuan.

MAE NOM: a river, a particular river, as the Chao Phraya, or any river; on maps, often 'Nom mae'.

MAE SAI RIVER, tributary to the Mekong, border with Myanmar: Mae Lavanaddhi, Nam Mae La:va (identified with a Lawa population).

MAE SARIANG: Mang Yuam, perhaps the name at a different early site nearby.

MAE TORANEE, goddess of earth: Queen Nan Tolani.

MANGRAI: Mengrai, Mamraya (Pali). Wat Mangrai in Chiang Mai, formerly Wat Kalakot.

MANUHA, eleventh-century Mon king: Manohari, Makuta.

MAO KINGDOM, large association of Shan states throughout the uplands, created from a centre in the Shweli River valley; capital Muangmow or Meng-mao, Kosampi, Kusambi, Koshanpyi.

MARTABAN: Muttima, Phan, Ban, Ban Muttima.

MEKONG RIVER: Kharanadi, Khalanadi, Mehkong, Me Hkawang, Mae Khom, Mae Nam Khong or Kong, Lancong Jiang, Lan-Song, Lan-Xang, Lan Ts'ang Chiang, Kieou-long in Xishuangbanna ('Back of the Dragon' or Naga), Kiu Lung Kiang, Chiu-lung, the Cambodian River.

MENG: Mon; the northern spelling is with a nasal 'n'.

MOGGALLANI, the Buddha's 'Left-Hand' attendant/disciple renowned for psychic power; with Sariputta, commonly sculptured small size standing on each side of Buddha images: Mahamogallana, Maha-maudgalyayana, Mawkalan, Mugalan (Singhalese).

MON: Meng, Talaing (Burmese), Peguans (European). Country: Ramaadesa, Ramaanagara, Padesaraa, Ramaa, Ramannya.

MONK: Bhikkhu (Thai), pongyi (Burmese).

MONDOP, in Thailand, a square stronghold building with pyramidally layered roof. Earlier in India: mandapa, the porch or foyer in front of a shrine.

MUN DAM PHRAKOT, fifteenth-century architect to King Tiloka, built Chedi Luang and many wats in old Chiang Mai: Sihagotta.

MUSLIMS in Yunnan: Panthay, Haw, Ho, Pansee (Burmese).

N

NAN: Nandapura, Dadarapura, Kava, Vora Nakhon, Pu Piang Chahang, P'a
NAN CHAO: Nanzhao. Literally, 'Southern Chief'. At first, Ta-Mung-Kuo (Great Mung/Meng Kingdom); changed in AD 794 to Nan Chao-Kuo; became Kingdom of Dali in 937' conquered by Mongols 1253.

NGAM MUANG, king at Phayao, Mangrai's friend and ally: Purachadanaraja.

NGEUN YANG at the Mae Sai River, capital of the Tai line that gave birth to their greatest king, Mangrai: Heranya Nakorn, Heraanagara, Hiranya, Ngoen Yang; name linked later with that of parallel Yonok capital, Chiang Saen.

O

P

PA DAENG, eminent Lan Na monastery in Chiang Mai: Wat Rattavana, Silaharattarama.

PADAUNG, tribe whose women elongate their necks with rings of cane: Palaung, Rumai, Kehongdu, 'Giraffe-necked belles'.

PAGAN: Phukam (Thai), Phukama, Punnakama (Pali), Arimaddanapura ('City that Tramples on Enemies'). Old Pagn: Tagaung, Hastinapura in the AD 400s.

PEGU, Mon city in lower Burma: Hamsavati (Pali), Ussa, Hamsavatinagara, Thanthawaddy.

PHAYAO: Penyao, Phukamyao, Byavanagara.

PHRA SINGH, Class One administrative wat, Chiang Mai: Wat Sihalarama; at first in fourteenth-century, Wat Li Chiang.

PHRAE: Phre, P'r, Mang Phon, Phlae, Balanagara, Wiang Kosai, Chai Phrae (Sukhothai name).

PING RIVER: Mae Raming(ka), Laming, Mae Nom Meng, Binganadi, Rameng, Lameng, Meping, Mapinna.

PITSANULOK: before fifteenth-century, Song Khue.

PONG, Manipur word for the confederation of the Meo Shans.

PRASAT: Prasada, pasada, pavilion, edifice, storeyed edifice. In the north, a fanciful, open tower-like monument for displaying a precious object; in Bangkok, also a palace.

PYU, A Tibeto-Burman people in the Irrawaddy valley, early AD centuries, before the Burmans: Tircul.
RAHU: To astrologers, the ascending node of the moon; considered a version of the t'ao-t'ieh chinless symbol because the chin is covered as sculptors portray him clutching and biting the moon into eclipse.

RAJAGAHA, major city on Gold and Silver Road southwest of Tali: Rajagrha, Rajagruh, Yng-Ch'ang, Vochan.

RAJASEE, mythological lion: Raxasi, chinthe (Burmese).

RAMAYANA, the great epic of India retold in local fashion as the Ramahien in Lan Na, the Ramakien in Siam, the Ramakerti in Cambodia, and the Pha Lam Pha Lak in Laos.

RAMPOENG (as written), Lampoeng (as pronounced): old monastery in Chiang Mai: Wat Tapodarama.


RED RIVER: Hong Ha, Hong Kiang, Yuan Kiang, Yun-Kieng, Yuan Jiang, Lishe Jiang, Mae Tek Luang, Song Kai, Song Hong, Song Coi (Vietnamese).

SABBASIDDHI, early thirteenth-century king in Hariphunchai: Soppasetti.

SAEN MUANG MA, Lan Na king: Lakkhapuragama.

SALWEEN RIVER: Sarabhu, Mae Khong or K'ong, Nu Jiang (in China).

SAM FANG KAEN, Lan Na king: Tissaraja.

SARIPUTTA, the Buddha's 'Right-Hand' attendant/disciple renowned for erudition: Thariputra (see Moggallani).

SETHI, a financier, wealthy man: Sethi.

SHAN: Tai Yai ('Great Tai'), Tai Neua (Northern Tai), Chinese Shans; northern Thai term: Ngieo.

SHWELI RIVER: Ruili, Nam Mao, Na Moh.

SI KOET, monastery in Chiang Mai: Wat Sirikot.

SI KUMAMA: preferred name for Mangrai's city of 1286; see Kum Kam.

SIP SONG CHAU TAI: Sibsong Cuthai.

SIP SONG PAN NA: Xishuangbanna (Chinese today).
SRI KSHETRA, city of the Tibeto-Burman Pyu people in lower Burma, early AD centuries: Ksetra, Sarekhettara (Burmese pronunciation: Thayekhettaya), often equated with Prome but ruins are at Hmawza, five miles southeast.

SUAN DAUK, former city area now monastery: Wat Suon Dok Mai, Wat Puppharama, Flower Garden Monastery.

T

TAI, in the uplands: Ai-Lao (oldest name), Ngai-Lao (in Yunnan), Deyyagama (800 years and more ago in Hariphunchai), Tai Ahom and Hkamti Shan to the northwest, Tai Yai, Tai Na, Mao Shans, Chinese Shans or Tayok, Tarok, Tarops; Tai Yuan (preferably Khon Muang, the northern Thai), Tai Khn (around Kengtung), Tai L (in Xishuangbanna, or Dai to the Chinese), Black, White and Red Tai, etc. in Tonkin, Lao (in Laos and northeastern Thailand), and fifteen others in the LeBar, Hickey and Musgrave list, not accounting for names in China or versions of names through history.

TALI, capital of Nan Chao on Lake Er-Hai: Ta-Li, Talifu Hunnam, Dali, Yang-chu-mieh.

T'AO-T'IEH, Chinese name for chinless mask first recognized in art of the Shang era, northern China, from mid-second millennium BC; widely used in northern Thai monasteries over doors, windows, in gables, often so stylized it is hard to recognize. See Kirtamukha.

TAVATIMSA, one of the Indian heavens: Dava:dungsa, Trayastrimsas.

TENG-YEH, city on Great Gold and Silver Road southwest of Tali, a Tai centre: Momien, Momein, T'eng-yeh-t'ing, Teng Chong, T'eng-tch'ong.

THATON: Sudhammanagara, Sudhammapura, Sudhammavati (Pali forms), Sadhom, Krung, Satheum.

TILOKA, fifteenth-century king of Lan Na: Bilaka, Tilokaraj and with hyphens added, the ultimate honorific: Sri-dhamma-cakkavatti-bilaka-raja-dhiraja.

TONKIN: Tongking, Tonguin, Tang Kia, Yao-Chi, Ke-Cho, Culani or Corani,, Hua P'an T'ang Hok, Chiao-Chih; Sip Song Chau Tai ('Twelve Tai Chieftains') in mountains of northwestern Vietnam.

TRAN-NINH, Vietnamese name for region in Laos, preferably called Chieng Khouang.

U

U RIVER into the Mekong near Luang Prabang: Hou, Du.

UBOSOT, monks' private hall: bot, upposathagara.

UMONGSELA, last city of Khmers in the north at headwaters of the Kok
River: Umongasila, U-Monka-Sila.

V

VASUDEVA, the ever-present sage living on Doi Suthep: Vasudeba, Vasudebarasi, Sudeva, Sudebba, Wathoo-dewah.

VESSANTARA, Prince in the story of the last of many earlier lives of the Buddha, the overwhelming favourite in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, sometimes spelled as pronounced: Wessandon.

VIENTIANE: Wiang Chan.

VISSUKAMMA, Vishnu in his early role as an aide to Indra, later a primary Hindu god: Visnukarma devaputra, Vivakarman, Vissanukam tevabut, Pissanukamma tevabut, Thn Tn.

W

WANG RIVER: Vankanadi.


WIHARN, Buddhist assembly hall for laymen: wihan, from vihara (but in India this was the monk's residence, often large, surrounding a quad, and multistoried).

X (used in French translations for some Cs: Xieng = Chieng).

Y

YONOK, first Tai kingdom in northern Thailand established by Prince Singhanavati with aid from a Naga named Bandhu; first capital: Bandhusinghanati Nagara, Yonok-Naga-Bandhu, Yonaka Nagabandhunagara, Yonakanagara. Later: Yonaka Nagara Rajadhani Jayapuri Sri Xang Sen, Yonaka Nagar Xieng Sen, Yonok Nagh Nakhon, Nakaburi; Yona, Yina, Yonarattha, Yn-Xang (Chinese), Yo-noke.

YUNG-CH'ANG-FU, seventh post-station west of Lake Er-Hai on the Gold and Silver Road in Ai-lao (Tai) territory: Rajagaha, Yong-tch'ang, Ying-chiang, Xingjiang, Yung-ch'ang Cheng, Wan-chang, Baoshan. To Marco Polo: Vochan, capital of the district of Zardandan ('Golden Teeth'), Carajan, Karajan.

YUNNAN, portions unrelated to present extent: Hun-Nam, Gandhara, Gandhala, Kandahar, Karajang (Mongols), Carajan (to Marco Polo), Gandalarit. In Kunming area: Mng-Hk, Mithila, Meithila, Videha, Wideharit. In Chinese literary style: Tien, Tsen ("Heaven").

Z

ZIMM: Chiang Mai (Burmese name still used by monks in the three Shan- or Burmese-style wats in Chiang Mai).
Reviews


Reviewed by B.J. Terwiel, Hamburg University

These two publications are from the Ban-ok Pup-lik Mioung-Tai. Ban-ok stands for 'Eastern' (Thai: Tawan-ok); Pup-lik is a neologism for 'Literary' (Pup meaning 'Manuscript and lik 'writing'); Mioung-Tai is the country of the Tai. The organisation was founded in 1987 to foster, propagate and disseminate the language/culture of the Tais of Assam (Ahoms, Khamtis, Phakeys, Aitons and Khamyangs).

During the last seven years it has developed into a proliferous and highly successful publishing organizations of the Assamese Tais, presiding over a rapidly growing cultural revivalist movement. The study of Tai language is introduced in many schools, cultural centres are sprouting up over the Assamese countryside and Tai-style rituals are widely being reenacted.

These two publications are among the lastest from the BOPLMT. Romesh Buragohain's book constitutes no less than 26 edited extracts from recent books and articles concerning the Ahom culture, brought together in seven chapters. Although the various authors are mentioned at the beginning of each chapter, unfortunately, the exact titles and publication details of the original sources that underlie this book have been omitted. This is a pity because some of the articles appear to have suffered during the process of incorporation. The book may be used as a miscellany of current opinion on the Ahoms, a useful guide to what is being read and written on this culture that showed until recently many signs of having ceased to exist.

The Tai, Vol 1 I found a somewhat more rewarding source of information, mainly because it represents a more up-to-date picture of the cultural revival movement. As a new symbol of the assertiveness of Ahom culture is the publication date: 766 Chu-Ka-Fa year, without further explanation of this era. Most of the articles of this first volume are published for the first time, giving a clear picture of the unabated vigour of this cultural revival. For readers of the Newsletter I propose to reproduce an extract of one of the articles on sericulture.

* * *

The Traditional Method of Muga Silk Worm Rearing

Extract from Nang Annapurna Borpatra Gohain, 'Handloom Weaving of Ahoms', The Tai, Volume 1, pp.117-126. This extract has been taken and slightly modified to improve the English, with the permission of the Journal's editor.
Som (Machilus bombycine) and Soalu (Litsaea polyantha) are the two principal food plants of the Muga silk worm. The muga food plantations were never utilised to the maximum level and one fully grown tree of 12 to 20 years growth can support the annual rearing to 5 to 10 layings and can yield 500 cocoons in one season.

After collection of seed cocoons they are loosely packed in bamboo baskets with dry straw. Prior to collection, the rearers ensure that the brown stage has been attained 4-7 days after the harvest. The seed cocoons are transported during the late night and early morning hours to avoid thermal shock. After reaching home the rearers remove the cocoons from the baskets and store them in bamboo cages in a safe place inside the thatched house with its thatched roof and plastered walls. Prior to storing the cocoons the rooms and the cocoon cages are cleaned and washed with clean water. Some rearers spread ash on the floor of the house to prevent insect pests. The rearers do not allow their family members or any visitors to enter into the site with shoes.

After the moths commence to emerge, they are allowed to couple naturally and the copulating pairs are tied on Kharikas. The Kharikas used by the rearers vary in length from 1.5 to 2 feet and 2 to 4 copulating pairs are tied depending on the length. The moths are allowed to couple overnight and the next morning if they have not decoupled naturally the rearers light a fire at some distance, the heat of which helps decoupling the months. Some tribal rearers (notably the Rabha Tribes in the South Kamrup area) eat the male moth after decoupling and the female moths after the third day of laying eggs. The traditional rearers use the eggs that have been laid up till the third day.

The rearing site and the area of the trees are ceremonially cleansed in a type of Puja at the rearing site. The objective of the function is to satisfy God and to drive out the evil moths [Ed: uncertain reading, the text says "to drive out the evil mouths"] which they believe cause a poor rearing. After the function the Kharikas are hung on the upper branches of the trees. On an average a rearer utilises 300 to 800 layings for commercial rearing during spring and autumn and 150 to 300 layings for seed crops during early spring and summer.

If the leaves are exhausted and the larvae descend down the treetrunk they are collected on a bamboo tray (Chandali). the worms are then sorted out according to their stages of growth and are mounted on different trees.

When the worms are in the third and fourth instars [stages?], the rearers collect jail leaves that have attained a semi-dry condition. These jail leaves are prepared one day prior to larval maturation and kept ready for moating [?] the ripe worms. On the initial day of the harvest the rearers again perform a ceremonial function at the rearing site. This particular ceremony is popularly known in Assam as a Ahom custom.
Eri Culture

Eri culture is also one of the traditions of the Ahoms. In Assam Eri silk has been cultivated since times immemorial by the Ahom community. Woven eri silk is a valuable commodity.

Eri culture, that is the commercial rearing of Saunia ricini is not a [large-scale] organised activity. It is a subsidised vocation with a limited production of cocoons and yarn. The artisan is forced to sell the ultimate product at prices that do not take the labour into account. Only if family members provide the labour can the silk be marketed and a pure commercial production is out of the question. In addition since the eri cocoon is open-mouthed it fetches a low price. The chrysalis is of more value than the cocoon. It could be said that the ultimately produced fabric is sold at distress prices.

Castor is the principal host plant for the eri worm. It grows as a sporadic stray bush mainly on the river banks or in the "Jhoom". The seed yield is poor because of the thick vegetative growth in the region. As leaves are picked for rearing the seed production is further lowered. The worm being a glutton, a rearer copes only with difficulty procuring sufficient leaf to feed even a small number of worms. When the rearing is at its peak the leaf supply has to be continuous to keep up with the voracious appetite of the larvae. This factor impedes the rearing on a large scale. In a season, on average only about half a kilo of empty cocoons per brood is harvested by a rearer.

The spinning is done with a laborious device. The yarn and the fabric made out of it is usually made for the use of the family that produces it.

Eri silk is similar to Muga silk but it has a lighter natural colour. Eri is harder to the touch and it has a less lustrous appearance than cultivated silk.

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Reviewed by M. Christine Boulan-Smit

This collection of articles (five in French and two in English) edited by Rodolphe De Koninck, takes up the critical question of the management of tropical forests in SEA. The contributors investigate the social, economical, and geo-political contexts in which this management is operating. The recent condition of the tropical forests in the SEA region and the major difficulties faced by each country are also examined.

Informative and thought provoking, this publication of the Study and Research Group on Contemporary Asia: GRAC (Groupe d'Etudes et de
De Koninck's two papers supplement each other, in introducing the major causes of deforestation in tropical regions, and outline the reasons why the management of these forests remains a complex and demanding challenge. His informative synthesis gives a human geographer's perspective on this major and intricate issue and provides a useful introduction to the other contributions.

For De Koninck, poverty alleviation is the major and most pressing challenge to confront in the protection of tropical forests. As he points out, the current agricultural expansion on the forest, presents considerable technical, financial social and ecological problems, and besides provides only short term relief for the problem of poverty. In the long term, says De Koninck, the alleviation of poverty in tropical countries depends upon the stabilization of national demographies, the implementation of agrarian reforms and a reduction of the dependency on agricultural products in the national economies. Ultimately a restructuring of the world economic exchanges is also desirable if the forest is to be preserved. In the meantime 'agricultural colonization' (la colonisation agricole p.13) is expected to expand to a further eighty million hectares by the year 2000, mostly at the expense of tropical forests which, if this rhythm is maintained, 'will have disappeared from the surface of the earth by the middle of next century' (p.40).

De Koninck stresses the unique bio-diversity of different types of tropical forests - genetic banks of great potential for mankind - and their ecological vulnerability. He outlines the enduring relationship of man with the forest, examining the social, economical and geopolitical causes that motivate both the exploitation of forest resources and the encroachment of agrarian societies on the forest. He argues that statistically, the increasing needs of growing populations for agricultural land and biomass energy, are the main sources of pressure on the forest, while world demand for wood products (plywood, hardwood, and pulp) with the considerable profit it allows on legal and illegal markets, constitutes the third major threat to forests. Industrial logging, the third most important factor, says De Koninck, is however often the first chronologically to start the process of deforestation in an area, permanently transforming the residual forest into agricultural land: '...where the loggers go, settlers follow' (p.42). Furthermore, argues De Koninck, the policies that allow or organize population migrations are dictated by the economic social and geo-political imperatives of national States, and these policies directly endanger an estimated fifty millions of traditional forest's dwellers. De Koninck recommends that, in order to understand the
present situation of forestry in SEA, researchers investigate the ideologies supporting territorial policies and closely examine their effects.

Veilleux's outstanding report presents the results of her two missions in Viet Nam in 1992/93 carried out for the purpose of establishing the base for cooperation between Vietnamese and Canadian researchers in the field of forest resource management.

Viet Nam which is one of the fastest-growing economies in SEA, is now confronting a major environmental crisis that could jeopardize its socio-economic development. Through retracing the main factors of deforestation in the past fifty years, Veilleux's presentation of facts and figures highlights the extension of what she describes as 'a contemporary dilemma'. She leads the reader in grasping the extent and consequences of the succession of wars, natural disasters and economic crises in a country with a particularly high annual rate of population growth (2.2% in 1991), which still relies largely on agriculture and forest resources for its survival. Viet Nam, which now faces a growing demand for energy on the part of its fast-developing industry, is turning to what remains of its forests for supply (wood collection) or cash (commercial logging). Furthermore, points out Veilleux, the climate of political instability, experimental land reforms, and economic crises of the past decades has been hardly favourable to the implementation of sound policies in forest management. She exposes some of the ecological consequences of large scale programs of transmigration, excessive slash-and-burn and unrestrained commercial logging. Veilleux stresses the pressing urgency to protect and restore Vietnamese forests. She emphasizes the forests' potential as resource for food and medicine and the need to allow researchers to study the unique and little-known bio-diversity of each eco-system. The preservation and reforestation of Viet Nam is a complex challenge that will require long term commitment, large financial resources and trained personnel, says Veilleux. However, she concludes, if the policies of the National Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development (NPESD) are successfully implemented (a dilemma in itself), Viet Nam 'could well become an example for other SEA nations facing serious deforestation problems of their own' (p.85).

Chabot reminds us that the forest estate of the Indonesian archipelago is the second largest tropical forest on earth (61.5% of the national territory). Stretching on both sides of the Wallace line, the Indonesian islands are also renowned for their distinctive bio-diversity (approximately 10% of the world flora). However, says Chabot, in the eighties, the deforestation proceeded at an average of 6,000 to 12,000 km2 per annum. The over-populated inner islands (Java, Madura, Bali) have already lost most of their forest cover, and deforestation is taking place on the outer islands of Indonesia, mainly in Kalimantan (57% of the island under concession), Sumatra and Sulawesi, and more recently in the Mollucas and Irian Jaya. Large transmigration projects have also been directed to these outer islands.

Chabot proceeds to account for each of the factors she believes are
contributing to the rapid deforestation of the Indonesian forests. Commercial logging followed by transmigration, slash-and-burn for which she distinguishes between traditional and more recent practices, the depletion of the biomass for domestic use, all are the culprits she enshrines in figures. However, Chabot's unclear handling of statistical data weakens her argument. At times, it may be difficult for some readers to accept the legitimacy of conclusions reached from comparing data which are not obviously related, although these conclusions are made predictable.

Finally, Chabot's statement (p.55) that plantations contribute largely to deforestation remains ambivalent, unless clarified. As they are now, the plantation programs (Reboisasi) are indeed a threat to the forest, as they generally imply the prior total deforestation of huge surfaces of existing forests in order to replace them by plantation for commercial logging. Furthermore, the present strategies and the plantation techniques are also questionable. This problem is not restricted to Indonesia. However, in that country, Reboisasi is now an heavily subsided industry (Hutan tanaman) and concession-holders can obtain fundings from the state supposedly to replant (i.e. deforest first) their concession. This is indeed an ecologically hazardous program that is hard to control. However, the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry is currently drafting a proposal to reform the national Agrarian Law with the objective of establishing new structures that would allow a proper management of the national forest estate that is under its jurisdiction.

Michaud's paper sets to analyse the discourse and policies of the state of Thailand in relation to the ethnic minorities of the Northern Highlands, to find out what he refers to as 'hidden motivations' underlying the present discourse of the state. In the sixties and seventies argues Michaud, controlling the area was regarded as a matter of state security, therefore the discourse of national unity, integration and development toward these populations, was in fact motivated by geo-strategic priorities. During the eighties, national security being ensured, the state took up an environmentalist discourse (i.e. forest dwellers damage the forest). This discourse, declares Michaud, is meant 'to justify the relentless action of the state to assimilate the mountain minorities'. Thus, argues Michaud, the political strategies supporting state policies in Thailand aim at a greater control and further assimilation of the northern highland societies into the centralized state, at the detriment of their political, economical and cultural autonomy.

However serious and well intentioned Michaud's inquiry may be, his dogmatic discourse tends to spell out, in a rather peremptory manner, little more than generalities on what is a very complex and delicate issue. As a result one is left to wade through heaps of piecemeal data which, in the end, do not make for a convincing case.

Bernard's paper presents some results of his current study of the depletion of SEA forests. For the purpose of showing the dynamic of regression of tropical forests in ten States of SEA during the sixties and eighties, Bernard produces two maps, elaborated with the
statistical material drawn from several pieces of research, and juxtaposes them with FAO statistics. A summary of the ecological, socio-economic or geopolitical context accompanies the statistical survey of each State.

The last paper by Dery briefly outlines the economic and geo-political framework of past and present markets for the different wood products in SEA. The broad scope of the topic prevents Dery from analysing the data in depth. This has, however, the stimulating effect of providing the reader with material for questioning, before tackling the related bibliography on SEA forests, co-assembled by Dery and Bernard.

As Dery concludes, one of the regional and international challenges lies in achieving a balance between exploitation and preservation of the forest resources. However, so diverse are the interests at stake that this is an extremely complex and challenging objective to implement.

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Reviewed by Gehan Wijeyewardene

In 1981 Christopher Koch published an article in Quadrant with the title 'Crossing the gap: Asia and the Australian imagination'. It begins:

In 1955, a year after our graduation from University, my friend Robert Brain and I set out for Europe.

He goes on to say that on impulse they broke journey in Colombo and travelled the length of India to the Himalayas. It is perhaps totally unfair - for the article is a sensitive assessment of aspects of Asian cultures and Australia's relation to them - but my immediate reaction was that 'With Koch and Brain through Southeast Asia' would be a good title for a paper on the kinds of growing attention being paid to that region. Koch ends his article, 'The future we face in the Pacific may be dangerous, but I suspect it will be anything but dull'. Indeed! If the experience of Australians coping with Japanese tourism in Queensland is anything to go by, the process, which I shall call appropriation, may be in reverse.

Christopher G. Moore is the author of a number of thrillers set in Southeast Asia, but this is the first I have read. One reason for my neglect is that I have built up a resistance to novels which I think of as neo-Orientalist appropriation - in which Europeans, Americans, Australians live out their fantasies against the native backdrop. The reason I read this one was that the publisher, Diethard Ande, suggested that some novels, this one in particular, gave a more convincing picture of the state of affairs (in this case Cambodia under UNTAC) than works of non-fiction.
Three questions I would like to consider briefly in relation to Cutout are: i. Does the novel inform us about UNTAC Cambodia? ii. Does it justify my fear of 'neo-Orientalism' and iii. Is it an entertaining read?

The picture of UNTAC Cambodia is horrible. Newspaper reports of what continues to happen in that country and other information such as that posted on the computer network must lead one to question the viability of United Nations operations and not be too sceptical about Christopher Moore. Do we need the Spesenritter of our modern world? Moore points to one of the embarrassing aspects of UN peace-keeping operations. Should the soldiery of some nations be let loose on a country like Cambodia? Should the Americans have been let loose on Vietnam? As I write this review, the morning newspaper reports an Australian teacher being put in T-3 Prison for possession of an AK 47 and ammunition bought by him for $50. In other aspects too Cutout is not far from the headlines.

Neo-Orientalist novels about Southeast Asia are seldom far from sex - and 'whores', the author's word of preference, form a backdrop to this novel. Christopher Moore is not unaware of the traps. His 'private eye' Vincent Calvino does not sleep with the locals. His Japanese mistress has flown back home, unable to stand Bangkok. He has a torrid one-night stand with an American socialite newspaper woman whom he seems gratuitously to insult. Finally there is the promise of a real relationship with a fiercely moral French doctor. To the Vietnamese prostitute who loses a leg he is a protective saint.

The Thai Police Colonel is interesting but unbelievable. Educated in New York, he travels with a saxophone which he plays in the middle of the night, and appears to have committed the entire Shakespeare corpus to memory, though he still carries around with him a Complete Works. Between the author, Calvino and the Colonel there is much about Thai and farang ways, 'face' and 'influential people'; not too convincing. Moore is at least conscious of the dangers of appropriation.

The story does have a line with which one may be involved. At its centre is the unending Saudi jewels affair which continues to plague the Thai police and government. In August, Arthit Weekly repeated on its cover, a Thai joke 'The police are not entirely wicked there is at least one good person, the Police Department's commemorative statue' (a representation of a policeman compassionately carrying a child, which stands in front of most police stations).

I would partially agree with my friend the publisher, Diethard Ande.

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Reviewed by Thaveeporn Vasakul, Political and Social Change, RSPAS, ANU
The author of this book, a UN recruit from Singapore, records here firsthand experience as deputy director of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC's) Division of Information and Education, and chief of its Production Unit which comprised T.V., Radio, and Print/Graphics Sub-Units. The book concerns Radio UNTAC's role in disseminating information deemed supportive of UNTAC's administrative and peacekeeping tasks, and its sponsored May 1993 elections. In April 1993, this multimillion dollar apparatus reached Cambodia's 21 provinces, and in May 1993, began to broadcast in Khmer fifteen hours per day. The rapid development of this apparatus and its network are impressive given the fact that, up to the early 1990s, the State of Cambodia's Radio Service reportedly only reached an estimated fifty percent of the population and broadcast an estimated total of forty five hours per week.

The nine chapters of the book centre around two aspects of Radio UNTAC's history: the building of its material basis and its broadcasting responsibility. Six chapters recount slow progress in the building of Radio UNTAC's infrastructure, attributing it to the lack or coordination among UN agencies and the laxity of recruitment criteria for both international and local staff. This lack of organization created inefficiency and recurrent tensions among staff members in the Radio Sub-Unit. Three chapters of the book describe Radio UNTAC's role in supporting UNTAC's peacekeeping missions and the May 1993 elections: disseminating information on UNTAC's civil and peace-keeping activities; reporting the developments of Cambodia's main political parties; providing all registered political parties access to broadcasting facilities; and reassuring the Cambodians that despite persistent violence and intimidation, the election would take place as scheduled.

While the author's general criticisms of Radio UNTAC's organizational deficiencies are constructive, her specific remarks on some of the team members' lack of management expertise sound abrasive. Deliberately or not, they convey images of Cambodian staff members as being ignorant, incompetent, unproductive, and unreliable. Her sole reliance on the paradigm of scientific management, i.e., organizational hierarchy, clear-cut division of labor, professional expertise, and planned productivity, in order to evaluate the work performance of local staff members certainly belittles their cumulative contribution of UNTAC's voice.

More importantly, the author's discussion of the quantitative and qualitative impact of Radio UNTAC is thin. Although she admits that "the widespread poverty under which Cambodians subsisted meant that few of the target audience had the equipment to hear UNTAC's voice" (p. 2), it remains unclear how many Cambodians had access to UNTAC's broadcasting. It is also unclear whether unconventional means, such as the setting up of public loudspeakers, the use of mobile broadcast stations, and the reading of the transcribed versions of radio programs, might have intervened to allow the Cambodians to receive UNTAC radio messages. Finally, the contents of the broadcast programs were not explicitly discussed, nor were the ways in which they interacted with other Cambodian-run broadcasting programs. These
Overall, the book is useful for readers interested in the changing role of the UN in the post-Cold War world and the reorganization of UN agencies coping with new aspects of peacekeeping responsibilities. The author's administrative professionalism, reflecting in her insistence upon duplicating and cataloguing Radio UNTAC's programs for the UN Archives, means that broadcasting programs and listeners' feedback are available to curious scholars. The deciphering of these materials will certainly shed more light on the politics of the mass media and its overall impact on the cultural texture of Cambodia in transition toward national reconciliation.

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Reviewed by David Bulbeck, Centre for Archaeology, University of Western Australia

During the last millennium various major ethnic groups established stoneware potteries across the face of Mainland Southeast Asia. The Lao involvement was noted in the 1960s with the first published identification of the Sisattanak kiln complex in the southern outskirts of Vientiane. The kilns were subjected to further superficial observation and some amateur excavation, before their systematic excavation and co-ordinated survey in 1989 by the Vientiane Archaeological Survey, a joint Australian-Lao initiative set up for the purpose. The leaders of the foreign contingent, Don Hein and Mike Barbetti, had both been members of the pioneering 1970s-1980s excavations of the enormous kiln complexes within and around Sisatchanalai, Central Thailand. Their site report on Sisattanak, co-authored with Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy of the Lao Department of Museums, rides the wave of 20 years' previous research into the technological variability and geographical extent of related stoneware traditions.

The monograph commences with a description of the kiln chosen for excavation, including project background, site maps, vertical sections, details of methodology, and photographs of work in progress. As one especially laudable aspect, a team at the site's edge classified and recorded all the excavated finds which could then be deposited with the Vientiane Museum immediately after fieldwork. The on-site processing was possible as Hein and Barbetti had already computerised their 'Ceramic Classification System', and is a major reason why their report has appeared so quickly. The only materials removed to Australia were charcoal samples for radiocarbon dating and clay samples for palaeomagnetic analysis, two areas where Mike Barbetti has deservedly gained an international reputation. As a final, specialist comment, analysis of the kiln and site structure is
in terms of depositional layers, whereas excavation and analysis of the distribution of finds appear to have been by artificial levels.

The middle part of the monograph describes the approximately 40,000 finds which include 12,000 unglazed grey stoneware pieces, 600 pieces with a thin green or occasionally brown glaze, detached fragments of kiln, and pieces of kiln furniture which had been employed to stack the pots for firing. The unglazed grey stonewares include such sundries as fishnet weights, chess pieces and architectural fittings, but mainly a limited range of undecorated jars, bowls and vases. An even smaller range of vessels comprise the glazed wares, but these were frequently decorated either in relief (e.g. vertical ribbing) or with repetitive, incised and stamped motifs. The kiln's products constitute an attenuated expression of the much broader ceramic tradition which also covered North and Central Thailand.

Oddly the most interesting finds, 1,500 smoking pipes with exuberant moulded decorations, may not have been made in the kiln at all, but instead dumped as fill (along with local earthenwares) after the kiln had been abandoned. This interpretation remains problematic until the events responsible for the concentrated dumping have been identified, and, in another equally plausible scenario, the pipes had been produced towards the end of the kiln's life. The issue is critical for dating the kilns as tobacco smoking was introduced to mainland Southeast Asia after AD 1600, in agreement with the 17th century date indicated by the paleomagnetic data and two of the three radiocarbon dates. However, the authors prefer a longer chronology in which the kiln was built in the 15th century and abandoned in the 17th. This is consistent with all of the radiocarbon dates, but not the paleomagnetic data, nor the Chinese ceramics excavated at the site which look 17th century or later (to judge by the illustrations). Thus the authors' long chronology gives undue prominence to a single radiocarbon date, and also clashes with the history of the Kingdom of Lao, whose capital was located at Vientiane no earlier than the 16th century. This last point leads to a more general criticism, the minimal attempt made by the site report to situate the ceramic production within Lao's history.

Possibly the most successful aspect of the monograph is its analysis of the kilns. The authors estimate a hundred evenly spaced kilns laid out in several east-west rows, and built to fairly standard specifications. As the authors note, the implied degree of planning suggests an intentional transplantation of an earlier-developed model, while the lack of evidence of change suggests a short-lived industry (both points obviously supporting a 17th century chronology). The construction technology is 'transitional' according to the typology which Hein and Barbetti have developed for the Central Thailand kilns. These transitional kilns were built mainly underground, but contain certain elements in common with the bricked surface kilns which dominated in Central Thailand after the 15th century. In the case of the Sisattanak kiln, its chimney and attached roofing (built of slab clay) which had stood above ground. The authors also emphasise the idiosyncratic firebox, although a group of (15th century?) Sisatchanalai kilns are similar in this and several other
aspects. They wisely leave the question of a direct historical connection pending systematic work at earlier Lao capitals.

The monograph's quality of production is more than adequate for a publication of this level, even if some of the section drawings and maps are sketchy, and occasional slips have crept through (e.g. Appendix D cited on p.14 is actually 'Chapter' 17). While of specialist academic interest in its treatment of a rather marginal kiln complex, the report stands up as a significant contribution to a landmark of the Laotians' own cultural heritage, as well as testifying to the extent of the mainland Southeast Asian stoneware tradition. The Vientiane Archaeological Survey is to be congratulated on this site report, especially on its promptness.

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The Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society Volume 41 (2) 1993 carries an article by Tyson R. Roberts, Research Affiliate, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute entitled 'Just another dammed river? Negative impacts of Pak Mun Dam on fishes of the Mekong basin'. We reproduce the abstract of this article.

Thailand's Mun River is the most important tributary of the Mekong River. The new Pak Mun Dam, just 5 km upstream from the mouth of the Mun into the Mekong mainstream, has profound ecological implications for the ecology of the Mekong river as well as the entire Mun drainage.

Baseline data on fishes and fish ecology of the Mekong basin, including the Mun River and its tributaries such as the Chee, are totally inadequate. Previous environmental impact analyses of Pak Mun underestimate or ignore major negative impacts on fish. The fish ladder to be installed on Pak Mun Dam may be the best design available, but the very rich and highly diverse megapotamic fish fauna of the Mun River cannot possibly be sustained by means of a fish ladder and fisheries stocking programs, no matter how much manpower and money are expended on them. Pak Mun Dam predictably will have significant negative impacts on the ecology and and fisheries of the Middle and Lower Mekong basin, not just on the Mun River, and on the Mekong mainstream based on Pak Mun hydropower will pose direct threats to the mainstream Mekong fisheries of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Another article by Tyson R. Roberts, in The Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society Volume 41 1993, titled 'Artisanal Fisheries and Fish Ecology Below the Great Waterfalls of the Mekong River in Southern Laos', is also of some significance in the light of the recent announcement of plans to establish a large tourist resort near the Khon Phapheng waterfalls in Champassak, Southern Laos (Far Eastern Economic Review, June 16 1994, and FEER Letters, July 21, 1994). The article concludes:

'The variety of habitats and biodiversity is probably as great or greater here than anywhere else in the Mekong basin. The waterfalls at Lee Pee are a significant physiographic and faunal boundary between
the lower and middle Mekong basin. The rapids below the waterfalls are the most important of any large lowland river in tropical Asia. The importance of these rapids in providing habitat for many species and in contributing to the productivity of the lower Mekong River needs more study, including extensive sampling and identification of the biota.

... The need to do such collecting is urgent, because engineering projects such as mainstream dams, upstream or downstream of Lee Pee, or canalisation of the Mekong for shipping may soon destroy the rapids and all the fishes in them.

* The Newsletter is edited in the Community Health Research and Training Unit, University of Western Australia and transferred to The Australian National University by electronic mail for printing and distribution.

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1 Scott Bamber presented a paper on 'Traditional medicine and ethnicity in Thailand, Laos and Sipsongpanna'. This paper is not reported on here, but a version will be published in the Newsletter. This report concentrates on sociological issues, for which I beg the pardon of our linguist colleagues.

* About the transliteration 'Hkun' for the familiar 'Khun', Me-hkawang as a version of Melong, and other reversals of Kh to Hk, a Shan explains: 'It is the British colonial transliteration of the second letter of the Shan alphabet (Ka), which is spelled as 'Hk'. but weirdly, the same letter in Burmese is transliterated as 'Kh'. I have no idea why. The English are crazy, I guess'.

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