International conference on Transnational migration in the Asia-Pacific region: problems and prospects.
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The Indochinese Refugee information Centre, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, in conjunction with the Institute of Security and International Studies and the Research Division of the Office of the President of the same university, organized a most successful conference on 1-2 December 1994 at Chulalongkorn University. The conference was the result of discussions by regional Vice-Chancellors at a meeting in Canberra, not long ago. Over a dozen papers were presented by participants from almost as many countries. The conference was opened by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare in the Thai Government.

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For a participant new to the field of migration studies it was a most valuable experience with high quality presentation and discussion. In this report, however, it will only be possible to mention some of the highlights.

One of the major issues which surfaced throughout the conference arose out of the presentation of the UNHCR representative, Bangkok Ruprecht von Arnim. He stated firmly very early in the conference that a distinction needed to be made between voluntary and involuntary migrants (refugees). As the conference progressed however, it became clear that many participants objected to this distinction. Viti Muntarbhorn, who presented a paper on 'Political/Legal implications of migration', put the matter in perspective when he pointed out that as in many other binary distinctions, there was a range of variation between the extremes of any distinction. One of the practical consequences, it is claimed, of maintaining the distinction is that it facilitates the definition of refugees as 'illegal immigrants', though the argument here is not entirely clear to me.

The keynote address was given by Stephen Castles of the Centre for Multicultural Studies, Wollongong University. This was a lucid examination of the development of theoretical positions in migration studies. Castles identified three main paradigms important in migration studies in recent years. The 'neo-classical economic equilibrium perspective' originated in 19th Century geographical theories, sees migration as being caused by push factors (poverty, land shortage and overpopulation) in the home country and pull factors, especially economic opportunities, in receiving countries.

The historical-structural approach criticizes the 'neo-classical' because its assumption of free choice for individuals is unrealistic. This second approach has its roots in political economy theories which stress the unequal distribution of economic and political power in the world economy. Migration is seen mainly as a way of mobilizing cheap labour for capital.

Both these approaches have been criticized and a new paradigm known as the 'migration systems approach' has emerged. As Castles writes, it sets out to provide a conceptual framework which examines all dimensions of the relations between emigration and immigration countries. The model recognizes the close links between flows of people and other flows, for instance, capital, commodities and technology. The model also emphasizes that such flows arise out of
historical linkages (such as colonisation, military presence, political influence, trade or cultural penetration).

The paper then goes on to discuss the pattern of family linkages, community formation in the host country and international linkages. This discussion based on the initial insight that migration decisions are typically family, not individual decisions and that these are quickly embedded in wider networks.

Part Two of the paper looks specifically at the Asian experience - mentioning its early roots - the westward movements from Central Asia in the middle ages, the more recent movements from China to Southeast Asia and the indentured labour of the colonial empires and the Chinese and Japanese movements to USA, Canada and Australia.

He then takes up the immediate past beginning in the 1960s and growing in the 1970s and 1980s, the main destinations being the Middle east, North America and Australia. In the 1990s he says, the major growth is in migration within Asia. This section ends with a consideration of refugees. Of the estimated 20 million refugees in the world, half he says have their origin in Asia - Indochina and Afghanistan.

Section Three looks at the case of the Federal German Republic under the heading 'from migrant labour to ethnic minorities'. He generalizes

The lesson which emerges is that it is extremely hard for a democratic government which respects human rights to stop or reverse a migratory process, once it has become well established.

Finally he looks at the options available to countries receiving migrants.

They can decide to close their eyes to what is happening, and thus encourage illegal migration and racism. Or they can try to work out a realistic immigration policy and thus ensure some measure of control and respect for human rights.

This last issue was given a great deal of attention and, surprisingly, some speakers apparently seeing the dilution of ethnic homogeneity as being comparable in its unattractiveness to the growth of racism. Though Castles says 'positive outcomes are not inevitable, he also expresses the optimistic view that 'Current trends toward growing democracy and respect for the rule of law in the more developed Asian countries are likely to provide the basis for enhanced security of residence, social entitlements and human rights for migrants'.

There then followed a series of specific studies, repatriation in Cambodia (Court Robinson, Indochinese Refugee Information Center (IRIC), Chulalongkorn University), ethnic diversity in Burma (Ananda Rajah, National University of Singapore), human trafficking (Siriporn Skrobanek, paper presented by Kritaya Archvanitkul, Women's Foundation, Mahidol University), migrant labour (Amara Pongsapich, Vice President, Chulalongkorn University) and the Chinese
Court Robinson’s paper was based on a study conducted by IRIC and published as Occasional paper series No./007, November 1994 Rupture and Return: repatriation, displacement and reintegration in Battambang Province, Cambodia. Robinson’s paper takes up more general issues than the experience of the Battambang returnees. Of the resettlement itself he concludes,

I would characterize Cambodian resettlement as a mixed success in that it provided a critical protection tool in the interim even as it delayed, and even discouraged, efforts to promote truly safe and voluntary repatriation under UN auspices.

More generally he takes up an issue inherent in the new Cambodian nationality law which 'permits the prompt expulsion of anyone without a residency permit and raises the prospect of crackdowns on ethnic minorities and foreign residents living in Cambodia, particularly ethnic Vietnamese'. The problem as he sees it, is to reconcile political imperatives of national governments with 'commitments to help one's neighbour in times of need'. He refers with hope to the 1966 Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee declaration in Bangkok which made the following statement of principles (referred to as the Bangkok Principles)

1. The exercise of the right to grant such asylum to a refugee shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act.

2. No one seeking asylum should except for overriding reasons of national security or safeguarding the population be subject to measures such as rejection at the frontier, return or expulsion [and]

3. In cases where a state decides to apply any of the above-mentioned measures to a person seeking asylum, it should grant provisional asylum under such conditions as it may deem appropriate to enable the person thus endangered to seek asylum in another country.

Ananda Rajah made the point that it is more useful to look at forced population movement in Burma from the point of view of structure rather than causes. Leading to the conclusion that 'protracted social conflict' rather than specifically ethnic conflict is the structure within which these movements take place. He expands on the notion of 'protracted social conflict' with the discussion of Burma as 'a weak state', one in which 'the institutions of the state are contested to the point of violence'. There was some disagreement with the notion that ethnicity was not crucial to conflict in Burma.[see following item]

Amara Pongsapich dealt with the changing migrant labour situation in Thailand where government development policy has created massive demands for labour as well as professional services at all levels. She concludes with the comment 'In the near future, Thailand will have to establish a new immigration policy to accommodate migrant workers'. This view of Thailand now becoming an importer as well as an exporter
of labour was a theme which many discussants addressed.

Siriporn Skrobanek's paper on 'The Globalization of trafficking in women' was based on work done as part of a study conducted by the Foundation for Women in cooperation with VENA of Leiden University. In her concluding recommendations, Siriporn writes,

findings from the research reflect that women, at local level, have become more aware of the problem and are willing to take action against trafficking in women. But they need more accurate information and appropriate counselling in implementing actions at local level to prevent illegal migration. With initiatives and participation of local women, an information campaign was launched during the second phase of the research in a few districts of the northeast. It was found that information from women victims have a great impact on rural women. They should be a prime force working on the issue at local level. Links with groups at national and international level should facilitate for local women so that they can broaden their understanding on the problem.

In this connection I might mention the presentation by Viti Muntabhorn (Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University) who made the point that international initiatives could work towards the solving of similar problems. he gave the example of recent legislation on Pedophilia in Australia for instance, where Australian nationals may be prosecuted for offences committed overseas. Certain reservations were expressed about this in discussion. One point that was made was that in economic activity international agreements now are coming to control transnational investment. But the protection being given is entirely to the rights of capital. In the United States there is an attempt to introduce Federal legislation which would make it necessary for US investors to abide by certain minimum standards in the employment of labour overseas. But this not yet been instituted.

Michael Godley surveyed the history and the literature on Chinese migration. Among his conclusions he writes of the 'emergence of a "transnational Chinese economy"',

Although I see no reason to believe that the 'overseas Chinese' do not make good citizens, wherever they happen to reside, yet the historical view of the Nanyang as an integrated, yet undifferentiated, arena for Chinese commercial activity continues to influence developments today thus far to the benefit of all concerned.

Wong Sio-Lun (Sociology, University of Hong Kong) spoke of his research on recent out-migration from Hong Kong of young and educated residents. He deprecated suggestions that this migration should be controlled, but did suggest that the Hong Kong authorities should encourage countervailing in-migration.

The next series of papers were on 'implications of migration for the Southeast Asian and Pacific regions'. J.V. Tigno (Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, University of the Philippines) spoke on "Migration, regional conflict and stability in countries in
Southeast Asia and the Pacific). Tigno argues that changing perceptions of migrants in society alter perceptions of security, stability and conflict, whose meanings differ anyway between countries and cultures. He categorizes conflicts and instabilities as comprising (but not limited to) socio-cultural issues, economic concerns, matters of well-being and political affairs. Like Professor Vitit cited above, Tigno suggests that many problems arising out of migrant crises, may be handled under developing international agreements such as APTA.

Saskia Sassen (Department of Urban Planning, Columbia University) spoke on 'Immigration in a world economy'. Sassen began by pointing out that 'Notwithstanding sharp differences in economic organization and culture among the developed countries, we can see considerable convergence in the basic frameworks shaping policy thinking about immigration. She writes that all these countries 'shape their immigration policies with the understanding that immigration is the consequence of the individual actions of emigrants, the receiving country is taken as not implicated in the process of migration' She argues that in the flows of capital, information and goods borders have been neutralized, but when it comes to the flow of immigrants and refugees, borders are strictly maintained. She examines these factors in relation to Japan of which she writes,

the fact of a new illegal immigration into Japan, a first in its long history, raises a question as to the impact of Japan's emergence as a global economic power generally, and particularly its growing role in the economies of the sending regions, on the formation of this new immigration.

Overt Japanese policy of a closed door policy and the 1990 law which opens the country to high level workers, but closes it to all low level workers, kept out the latter. Nevertheless, the prevention of legal immigration only fosters an illegal flow.

Generally, she argues that there are two dominant mechanisms binding immigration to emigration countries. 1. Past colonial or current neo- or quasi-colonial bonds 2. the economic linkages brought about by economic internationalization. Looking closely at the Japanese experience of immigration she concludes that 'the new immigration is part of the globalization of Japan's economy. Her final paragraph reads

the global integration of economies on the one hand and, on the other, the growth of a network of rights and court decisions supporting the rights of immigrants are already reducing the autonomy of the state in immigration policy-making, this should not be surprising given the trends towards transnationalization in economies, in culture and in the battle around human rights.

Gehan Wijeyewardene presented a paper on the socio-cultural implications of migration, with special reference to Burmese refugees. Perhaps the most important point he made was that given the massive, destructive effects on migrants, obvious for the world to see, the
very notion of considering 'socio-cultural effects', probably reflects our own concerns as to how these phenomena affect our lives and the world we ourselves occupy. He also drew attention to the effects for the future of Burma which will lose many generations of youth, who will either be resident somewhere else or have been deprived of all experiences but destitution and war. He also suggested the Thai government should be concerned about the introduction into its territory of pockets of population not part of its overall border and social policy. He did point however to the commendable way in which the Government and Army seemed to be handling the difficult situation of the Mon refugees in Halockarni camp, despite recent disturbances there.

Kathleen Appleton (Harvard University) presented a paper on behalf of a research team led by Richard Mollica on the 'Implications of migration for health and mental health'. The comparative study brought out very clearly the ongoing, devastating consequences of conflict and forced migration on the victims.

I apologise for the gaps in this report. I have been entirely dependent on the papers circulated at the conference and have therefore not been able to comment on the many other contributions both formal and from the floor. In conclusion I must offer my thanks and congratulations to the organizing committee, Amara Pongsapich, Kusuma Snitwongse, Supang Chantavanich and Gary Risser, for a most productive and successful conference and my thanks to the President and Chulalongkorn University, for the hospitality shown the participants.

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Ethnicity, Federalism and the Burmese insurgency

In his paper at the conference on 'Transnational migration' Ananda Rajah [see conference report above] argued that where the Burmese conflict was concerned one 'should abandon the concern with causes'. In a private communication to Dr Rajah, Professor F.K. Lehman (Chit Hlaing) writes there can be no finite causal resolution in as much as each side bears a good deal of responsibility for the present state of affairs. That is, horrid as the SLORC is it could never have come to be, and certainly could never have succeeded, had it not been for the persistent and intransigent minority insurgencies from even before actual independence it is a vicious circle because the worse the military got, the more intransigent the insurgencies became, which made the military even worse.

Chit Hlaing goes on to say that in the circumstances the Tatmadaw could pose, at least to the Burman majority that it is 'the saviour and preserver of the Union'. Moreover, the US and other Western intelligence agencies have found it in their interest to keep the conflict going in order to destabilize 'a region where governments might not be altogether friendly to "our" policies'. Even NGOs and their missionary supporters have an interest in continuing the conflict as they would otherwise lose their cause and the funds which flow to them.
The most interesting comments however have to do with the notion of ethnic self-determination of which he says keep feeding each and every such minority tribal ethnic population the sadly oversimplified doctrine that it is an unambiguous human right to expect that every such entity should be a sovereign nation! Making people adopt wildly unrealistic goals is NOT an altogether kindly activity.

Finally he makes the point that one of the greatest complaints was that the minority states of Burma were not allowed to raise their own revenue to provide at least some of the things they wanted such as schools hospitals and roads, which the central government could not find the funds for in such remote regions. The Central government disallowed such local fund raising and this he says is 'what the Federalism movement has always been about'. Even the Kachin agreement with SLORC was on the basis that they would be allowed to raise their own revenues on the border trade with China - a promise 'already broken'.

To me this is one of the most thought-provoking statements on the tragedy of Burma. There is no doubt that Chit Hlaing sees SLORC as horrible, but he attempts to point the way to understanding why they are there and why the insurgencies are there and what might have short circuited them, or even now bring them to an end.

I think it is wrong to under-estimate the importance of ethnicity, but this brief comment helps us understand what material factors ethnicity actually uses as its base of manifestation. One has to agree that some arguments of self-determination are completely unrealistic, Nevertheless one should also question the Western, liberal-induced arguments of nationalism and national identity which glorified such post-colonial notions of being 'Burmese', 'Indian', 'Ceylonese' (Now 'Sri Lankan'). Much of this had to do with English-educated, middle-class self-interest. And was perhaps even more unrealistic than modern promotion of ethnic identities. The consequence of the middle-class insistence on national identities was that all possibilities of compromise and community interest were ground into dust between the grinding stones of middle-class nationalisms and ethnic particularisms. Can we even now pursue some of Chit Hlaing's insights in the hope of resolution.

G.W.

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Tai Traditional Medicine and Ethnicity in Thailand, Laos and China

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Introduction

This paper addresses the association between traditional medicine and definitions of Tai ethnicity in three countries, Thailand, Laos and China or, in other words, how traditional medicine relates to being Thai, being Lao or being Tai in China. By 'traditional medicine' I
mean the complex of beliefs and behaviour associated with the prevention and treatment of illness which has existed apart from the system of modern medicine. Among Tai peoples this is extremely heterogeneous, with individuals availing themselves of a wide variety of options, including herbal remedies, massage, spirit belief, and dietary change. While I will not go into the argument of whether traditional medicine is more or less effective than modern, it is worth noting that, through language and culture, traditional medicine is also closely bound to the natural environment in the form of plants and animals, and for this reason the efficacy of traditional medicine may be related to regions or groups of people.

In the course of my research on traditional medicine in these three countries over a number of years it has become apparent that, in addition being about the treatment of illness, traditional medicine also has another dimension, that of defining ethnicity. I have referred to this briefly previously in an article in the Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter (TYPN) (Bamber 1989a) and, as Gehan Wijeyewardene has recently indicated, my work on Chinese Tai peoples describes some of the ways this has taken place in Sipsongpanna. Recently, in April this year, I was also able to gain some insight into the use of traditional medicine in Laos, particularly in the northern provinces of Luang Nam Tha and Phong Saly.

Through a comparison of information from these three places, some useful insights on Tai ethnicity can be gained. Here I want to briefly go through the evidence, such as I have at hand, from Thailand, China and Laos, then I will attempt to relate this back to some of the broader issues which have been raised concerning ethnicity in the region.

Thailand
Traditional medicine, while widely practised in Thailand, until recently was either officially suppressed, or at best ignored. From the late 1970s to the late 1980s, however, there was a resurgence of official interest in traditional medicine. This took the form of backing from the MOPH, for establishment of herb gardens attached to universities, hospitals and other institutions, support for research, written publications, and even a series of stamps featuring some of the better known plants from the traditional pharmacopoeia.

Support for these activities came from several areas. Partly it came about through foreign support, for example with funding from the development assistance arms of the Netherlands and Germany. There was also interest shown by the Thai royal family, and one of the princesses, Chulabhorn, has spoken publicly on the scientific investigation of some medicinal plants. This resulted in a publication titled The Princess' Book of Medicinal Plants (Bamber 1989a:11). Much support also came from government and non-government organisations (NGOs). Perhaps the greatest interest in this context is the support for traditional medicine which came from the Ministry of Education's Office for the Promotion of Thai Identity in the late 1970s. This took the form of a number of publications on herbal medicine and massage, the text emphasising the long history of medicine in Thailand, and its
efficacy, reflecting the ingenuity and self-sufficiency of the Thai populace (Bamber 1989a:11).

It is also useful to look at the type of traditional medicine which was being promoted, and the places where it was being used. For the main part it was central Thai in character, and was largely determined, it seems, in conjunction with the school of traditional medicine at Wat Pho. It was mainly herbal or massage, free from any associations with spirit beliefs and magic and was also very limited in regard to the range of therapies selected. Whereas some prescriptions used in traditional medicine had over a hundred ingredients, the form of medicine promoted has far far fewer, and these are often used in a way which is similar to modern medicine. That is a single drug for a specific ailment. There was also a corresponding change in the names of diseases: in some cases the old names were abandoned completely, and in others there was an attempt to translate old name into a modern equivalent, with a subsequent narrowing of meaning. For example you find lom only in the names of a couple of conditions these days whereas in the past it was common, and applied to a wide range of illnesses (Bamber 1989b).

While the traditional Thai medicine which was promoted was central Thai in character, the intended beneficiaries were generally of quite different origin. Apart from a small number of middle-class Central Thai consumers, mainly interested in herbal shampoos or skin care products, traditional medicine was directed towards the rural poor. By and large this meant Northeasterners and Southerners. As I have argued elsewhere, given the regional specificity of traditional medicine, it is questionable whether taking medicine from one region and applying it in another is of great benefit, and to Northeastern villagers medicine derived from the Central Thai region is probably almost as alien as modern medicine, and a lot less effective (Bamber 1989a:11). The situation would have been similar for Southern Thais, with the added problem of expecting the Moslem section of the population to accept a traditional medicine whose origins are closely bound to Buddhism.

It is also of interest to look at the role of NGOs in promotion of traditional medicine. While there is no reason to doubt that their intentions were sincere, it is evident that a number of the early NGO projects tended to impose central Thai medicine on regional peoples. This probably reflects the background of those who ran the NGOs, who were generally of middleclass Bangkok origins. Later there was a move towards more truly community-based projects which attempted to make use of local knowledge. An example of these is the NERDEP project at Phon, near Khon Kaen, where an effort was made to locate people with knowledge of traditional medicine from the local area. With their help a catalogue was compiled of local plants which had medicinal value and villagers encouraged to either grow these or to conserve forest areas where they could be gathered.

It is worth noting that the official movement for promotion of traditional medicine seems to have lost a lot of enthusiasm in recent years. The number of publications has decreased and the herb gardens
are looking rather neglected. The main force for sustaining interest seems to be the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has led to a search for effective drugs among the traditional pharmacopoiea. Nowadays, with the decline in official interest, NGOs appear to be doing much more than other bodies in regard to traditional medicine.

Another important point is that at the same time that traditional medicine was being officially promoted, local beliefs and practices related to health were being eroded in various ways. To take one example, feeding practices for children. In Thailand, and other countries of the region, the practice of early introduction of solid food to infants is widespread. This practice, which is especially common in the north, can be as early as the first week of life, and usually involves the feeding of sticky rice and banana which has been pre-chewed by the mother. For some time this practice has been frowned on by the MOPH and it is actively discouraged by community health workers, although there appears to be no evidence that it does any harm to the child (Chawapornpan 1992). A similar process may be seen in relation to other advice given to pregnant women, including practices during confinement (yu fai, yu yen, yu kam) after childbirth, and even cutting of the hair. In all these areas the pattern is one of the imposition of a model emanating from Bangkok, and often rationalised by reference to Western practices.

In sum, the picture which emerges for Thailand is of the official promotion of a sanitised, 'ethnically cleansed', version of traditional medicine, and a simultaneous erosion of certain other cultural features related to health. The approach has been top down, with little attempt to involve community participation or to acknowledge regional differences. In the end, it was left to the NGO movement to attempt to achieve this. It is probably no coincidence that the period of greatest government interest in traditional medicine coincided with a time, in the 1970s and 1980s, of considerable political division when national unity was at threat. With greater political stability in recent years this accent on popular culture was no longer as important, and the promotion of traditional medicine ceased to be of use as a political strategy. This scenario seems to have been the case for all regions except the far South. As far as I am aware, no such programmes have been carried out in provinces such as Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani, where there is a substantial Moslem population, who are among the poorest, if not the poorest, in the country and probably most in need of health services. It would appear that in these places any action which would have served to emphasise ethnic differences was discouraged.

Sipsongpanna
In Sipsongpanna the Tai Lue also have a traditional medicine which has many features in common with that of Tai groups in Thailand, incorporating herbal medicine, a belief in spirits, and practices such as blowing air or water over the body of the sick person. In Sipsongpanna, however, there has been a concerted effort on the part of the state to impose restrictions on the types of practices which can be carried out. The most dramatic examples are the suppression which occurred during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural
Revolution. Since the early 1980s there has been considerable easing up of restrictions, however spirit-based curing practices in particular are still strongly suppressed (Wijeyewardene 1994:7).

The result has been that, of the range of medical practices formerly in use, only herbal medicine is officially recognised. Even here there is strict control. For example, I have previously described how an attempt was made recently to establish a 'Tai traditional medicine course' in Jinghong. This course seems to have been a poorly-conceived and token effort, initiated by the government as a form of recompense for the potentially lucrative research into Tai materia medica (Bamber 1993). It made no allowance for differences between Tai people from Sipsongpanna and those from Dehong who were also included among participants and it focussed solely on herbal medicine.

In this case, as Gehan Wijeyewardene has indicated, the state has effectively defined the form which the Tai medical tradition may take, and the conditions under which it can be practised (Wijeyewardene 1994).

Laos

I would also like to make a few comments on the situation in Laos. These are based on a brief three week trip in April where I looked at Primary Health Care in a number of northern provinces. As it happened my official companion on this trip was a deputy director of the Research Institute for Medicinal Plants in Vientiane and I was therefore able to get a close look at the way traditional medicine is supported and used.

In Laos traditional medicine is officially encouraged. This may have less to do with its perceived efficacy relative to modern medicine than necessity; in view of the low priority given to funding of health services, traditional medicine is a real alternative for people living in remote areas. The official encouragement for traditional medicine also accords with World Health Organisation (WHO) policy, and thus the Ministry of Health may be seen to be doing the right thing by the WHO, thus opening the way for funding in other areas.

Traditional medicine is also encouraged as a commercial enterprise. The Research Institute for Medicinal Plants has a factory in Vientiane where some of the medicinal plants it has investigated grown and processed for sale. Apart from domestic distribution, an important market for these is Lao communities overseas, primarily in the US and France. This is not the only place in Laos where traditional medicines are produced in commercial quantities; small medicinal plant factories are attached to the health offices in some provincial centres. I visited on such factory in Phong Saly which has staff numbering about five or six people.

From what I could see the traditional medicine being promoted by the Ministry of Health is mainly ethnic Lao in origin, rather than being based on that used by other ethnic minorities. Research appears to be conducted very much on an ad hoc basis without any attempt to understand the usage of medicines in a cultural context. The basis for
selection of most medicinal plants appears to be the textual
tradition, supplemented by information obtained through discussions
with practitioners. As a consequence medicinal plants are viewed
singly in terms of pharmacological efficacy. Non-textual, or
non-ethnic Lao, traditions also appeared to be neglected, as were
other forms of medicine, for example spirit-based curing techniques. I
was not in a position to get any information on spirit curing, and
would be interested to know whether the official support for herbal
medicine is accompanied by a corresponding antagonism towards such
practices. Certainly outside the official traditional medicine, there
does not seem to be any restriction on the use of herbal medicine by
minority groups. Medicinal plants, of many different origins, and
animal parts intended for medicinal use, are freely available for sale
at markets, for example the market at Mu'ang Sing and Luang Nam Tha.

To sum up, a superficial look at the use of traditional medicine in
Laos suggests that its official support is weighted heavily in favour
of the ethnic Lao herbal tradition. As in Thailand, there seems to be
an attempt to impose a 'scientific' approach, with laboratory
research, and technology for processing and packaging the product in a
way which resembles that of modern medicines. In contrast to Thailand,
however, there does not appear to have been any overt political use of
traditional medicine to promote ethnic or national identity. Rather,
the process is a more subtle one which can probably be attributed more
to ethnocentricity.

Conclusion
What does all this say about Tai ethnicity? It is perhaps useful to
consider first the situation from the point of view of the sick
person: in illness there doesn't seem to be any rigid ethnic boundary
which defines what is perceived to be effective and what is not. Tai
villagers in Sipsongpanna avail themselves of modern vitamin
injections and Chinese acupuncture, as well as herbal remedies. In
Laos, the efficacy of Chinese-manufactured artemisinin (qing hao su)
appears to be equally appreciated by Tai Lue, Haw Chinese and Khmu.
Similarly, I recently interviewed a modern-trained Thai doctor who has
been working at Najaluai in Ubon, who complained that the villagers
kept demanding injections. Thus, at least in regard to matters of
personal health, Tai peoples seem to take a heterogenous approach to
treatment. think it is clear from this account that the suppliers of
services in the three countries described here, government and, to
some extent, non-government, have defined traditional medicine very
narrowly. This has tended to be, in Thailand and Laos, in terms of a
sanitised version of the predominant culture or, for China, the local
Tai culture. In all three places it is interesting to note the role
which 'science' fulfils in legitimising this centralising process.

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Reviewed by Scot Barm, Division of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, RSPAS, ANU.

You can't always judge a book by its cover and in this case nor should you judge it by its title. For while Chaiyan Rajchagool's The Rise and Fall of the Absolute Monarchy has a good deal to say about the rise of the absolute monarchy in Siam, it has precious little to say about its fall. But more of that later. The work in question is a 1989 revision of Chaiyan's doctoral dissertation originally submitted to Manchester University in 1984.

In essence, Chaiyan's study is concerned with tracing the emergence of a new state form - the centralizing absolute monarchy - in the context of colonialism and capitalist development during the latter part of the nineteenth century. This ambitious project is developed with reference to the theoretical insights of Hamza Alavi (who provides Chaiyan with a glowing, and somewhat self-serving testimonial in the preface), and employs Alavi's concepts of 'peripheral capitalism' (PC) and the 'state in peripheral capitalism' (SPC).

Unfortunately, however, Chaiyan's mode of presentation is of a rather rambling, diffuse nature which seriously diminishes the book's value. In particular, it seems odd for a scholar who strives so hard to blow his own theoretical horn not to locate his work within the existing debate on the transition from pre-capitalist Siam to capitalist Thailand. A handful of authors (e.g. Riggs, Chattip and Suty) are mentioned in passing, but nowhere does Chaiyan seek to critically evaluate any of these works in meaningful sense so as to develop his own thesis. At the same time one is struck by Chaiyan's apparent unfamiliarity with important studies produced during the mid-1980s: the work of Hewison and Suehiro on the emergence of capitalism in Thailand, for example, and Nakharin Mektrairat's impressive research on the intellectual ferment during the 1920s which provided the backdrop to the overthrow of the absolute monarchy. Considering that Chaiyan is a Thai academic his reliance on a range of largely familiar...
(primarily English-language) secondary sources to construct his argument is also disappointing, for in an empirical sense, at least, we learn nothing new. Had he augmented these sources with previously unused materials from the Thai Archives or the newspaper holdings of the National Library in Bangkok his work may have conveyed a greater sense of freshness and vitality than it does.

While the greater part of the study looks at the emergence of the absolute monarchy from the latter nineteenth century (curiously referred to as the 'capitalist state' by the 1910s, p.132), Chaiyan, as noted above, has little of substance to say about its demise beyond the following:

The absolute monarchy, as the initial political shell of the SPC [state in peripheral capitalism], could not contain and resolve the contradiction between the form of the state and its changing social content, as the peripheral capitalist structure of Siam developed and matured. Or, to put it another way, absolute monarchy was increasingly in contradiction with - the state apparatus as an organization of economic extraction and the state as bureaucracy. That contradiction eventually erupted in the revolution of June 1932 which brought about far-reaching changes in the structure of the state. Absolute monarchy was brought to an end, constitutional monarchy, as a mild form of democracy, was established. (p.155)

Apart from such palaver, the work also contains what can only be described as an exceedingly facile discussion of Thai 'nationalism', a discussion which perhaps would not be out of place in an an Honours thesis but jars the senses when presented as a part of a doctoral dissertation. The 'nationalism' Chaiyan refers to is essentially 'official nationalism' (the early 'popular' variety is not even recognized), yet he gives us no greater insight into this phenomenon than Walter Vella did in Chaiyo, his disappointing study on Vajiravudh. In one passage referring to the effect of military conscription, for example, Chaiyan, at his most banal, refers to peasant conscripts indoctrinated with state 'nationalist' ideology as "walking tape-recorders" who "transmitted" these ideas to other peasants when they returned to their villages. (p.128)

Elsewhere the book is marred by some fairly basic factual errors, including: 'the railway from Bangkok reached Chiangmai in 1908' [p.98 - it was 1922]; 'the abortive coup d'tat in 1911' [p.134 - 1912]; and on government retrenchments made by King Prajadhipok in 1926, 'some state officials also felt the axe, over four hundred of them being made redundant' [p.159 - make that between eight to ten thousand].

Having mentioned some of the weaknesses of the book I should point out that I began reading 'The Rise ' with considerable enthusiasm, a feeling, however, which waned the further I progressed. A second reading only served to confirm my initial impressions. While I applaud Chaiyan's critical stance towards royalist historiography [of both the Thai and Western variety], his emphasis on 'structure' over the 'agency' of 'great men', and his attempt to avoid economic
reductionism in explaining the emergence of the absolute monarchy, I find it regrettable to say that the tangible result of his labours reminds me rather more of a draft manuscript than a publishable book.


Reviewed by Penelope Graham, Anthropology, RSPAS, ANU.

This appealing publication initially accompanied an exhibition of Tai textiles shown in Bangkok, Washington, Los Angeles and Toronto in the course of 1992 and 1993. Both the book and the exhibition stem from collaborative research over an extended period on the part of Dr Mattiebelle Gittinger, a leading scholar of textiles in South and especially Southeast Asian contexts, and Dr H. Leedom Lefferts, Jr., a cultural anthropologist who began his field studies in Northeast Thailand over twenty years ago. After a joint Introduction, providing background to the publication, Gittinger and Lefferts contribute two and three separate chapters respectively to the volume. In his chapters, Lefferts draws on Gittinger's expertise for a discussion of Tai banners (p.130-140) and acknowledges his Lao counterpart Mr Phosay Summalak as co-author of a section on funerals among the Tai Dam in northwestern Laos (p.79-84).

Following the now familiar format established in similar book and exhibition projects at The Textile Museum in Washington and The Fowler Museum of Cultural History in Los Angeles -- from the landmark focus on Indonesia's "splendid symbols" (Gittinger 1979) to the recent survey of Florenese textiles (Hamilton 1994) -- the publication is not so much a descriptive catalogue as a free-standing scholarly discussion of its subject presented in an introduction and five chapters copiously illustrated with archival, field and studio photographs. Virtually all of the illustrations are cross-referenced in the main text, as well as being captioned with explanatory notes and, in the case of reproductions of textiles, full cataloguing details. Printed on good quality paper, the book is well-edited and attractive in design, its layout accessible for informative browsing as well as for concentrated reading. Besides the main text and footnotes, the book includes a glossary of non-English terms (mostly Tai and Lao textile terminology), a list of references, and three appendices dealing with "Looms of the Tai", "Natural Dyes in Thailand" and a "Pilot Study of Dyes in Historic Tai Textiles".

To their credit, the authors make no claim to presenting a definitive account and theirs is neither the first nor the last word on Tai textiles. In this respect, they are careful to acknowledge that their work participates "in a tradition of studies by Tai, mostly Siamese, and a few others concerning Tai textiles", before drawing attention to previous studies of particular note. At the same time, they explain their focus on Tai Theravada Buddhist communities within Thailand as arising "almost by default, given the relative dearth of information..."
available for most Tai groups in comparison to the Siamese of the Central Plains, the Yuan of the North, and the Thai-Lao of the Northeast" (p.22).

Despite this uneven source material and various restrictions placed on their own field research among Tai outside Thailand, the authors have made a valiant attempt to overlook the boundaries of contemporary states in order to set a broader framework for their analysis in the cultural heritage of peoples who speak one of the languages of the Tai language family. Thus, the Introduction lists and maps the fourteen groups of Tai-Kadai speakers surveyed for the publication. While this framework embracing "the Tai experience in Southeast Asia" sets an exciting agenda for research as evinced in this publication, it also generates a degree of tension evident in the main text and its organization as the focus shifts between different levels of comparative analysis.

Organizationally, the authors' deal with this problem through a division of their main text into two parts. Of these, Part I (Chs.1-2) presents an overview of Tai textiles comparatively across the Southeast Asian region considering their technical forms and historical origins, contexts of use and associated meanings. Part II (Chs. 3-5) then focuses thematically on textiles within the realms of religion, royalty, and in the definition of self among the more well-known Tai Theravada Buddhist communities located primarily in Thailand. Since the descriptions and analyses provided in Part II form "the foundation for the syntheses" (p. 22) contained in Part I, some may find it more satisfying (as I did) to reverse the sequence of these two parts when it comes to giving the text a close reading.

In Chapter 1, Gittinger posits a heuristic distinction between "core" and "supplemental" groups among the textiles under consideration, drawing on characteristics such as design, spatial organization, and patterning techniques to "help identify those original Tai textile forms and differentiate them from later borrowed forms" (p. 29). From her analysis of the "core" or basic forms, Gittinger then argues that the Tai originally used a back-tension loom and favoured a number of associated patterning techniques, before absorbing weft resist-dyeing as a decorative scheme from international sources via the Khmer in Southeast Asia sometime after the thirteenth century. On the other hand, the Tai likely "introduced silk weaving to the Khmer, probably bringing the technology with them from southern China" (p. 39). She goes on to explore the distribution and functions of the basic Tai textile forms across a spectrum of Tai-speaking peoples in the region, suggesting that comparative analysis of this kind sheds light on discontinuities and anomalies apparent in particular instances.

In the following chapter, Lefferts examines the social meanings of the production and consumption of Tai textiles in relation to the stages of a woman's life and, as he puts it, "in service of the social hierarchy" as well as "in service of ancestors". At this stage, his argument that textiles establish and affirm social hierarchy through their implication in exchange relations between subordinate and superior does not address the specific question of why cloth should
take on these functions as against other forms of material and immaterial prestation. He (p. 89) is rather at pains to see through textiles how a Tai woman

creates meaning in her life and in the lives of others; she shows herself to be an effective member of a household, complementing her husband, and playing a major role in the reproduction of a Tai social system. Moreover, cloth and the gift of cloth provide ways not shared with males by which women can attain religious goals.

Textiles bring to light the contribution, hitherto hidden, of Tai women.

In Part II, the authors analyse the semiotics and saliency of "Textiles in the Service of Tai Buddhism" (Ch. 3 by Lefferts), "Textiles in the Service of Kings" (Ch. 4 by Gittinger), and "Textiles in the Service of Self" (Ch. 5 by Lefferts). The discussion of textile requisites for a monk and the ritual contexts, including ordination, in which these and other textiles feature might be read in conjunction with a related article by Lefferts (1993) on whole versus cut-and-sewn cloth in Tai Buddhism. His penetrating analysis demonstrates yet again (cf. Geirnaert 1983) how vital systemic contrasts are encoded in the often complex relations between more and less sumptuous textile forms.

In the subsequent chapter, Gittinger looks at courtly uses of textiles, concentrating on seventeenth century Ayuthaya under King Narai and nineteenth century Bangkok under King Mongkut. Here textile production for the court must be considered alongside the tremendous Asian trade in textiles over this period, a trade which in Siam "was, at least in theory, a monopoly of the king and a few nobles" (p. 158). The final chapter discusses the costume of Tai lay men and women as part of their self-definition within a larger social matrix. It deals with maturation and self-presentation, as Tai who, like everyone, are "born naked into the world, . . . grow in knowledge of their social environment" (p. 193) and dress accordingly in apparel of various kinds each with its own connotations.

Overall, these three chapters proceed through a series of dichotomies: one explores the fundamental dichotomy between monks and lay people; the next examines the distinction between royalty and commoners elaborated in the conspicuous display of fine textiles in court ceremonial; then, finally, the textiles of lay people are seen to exhibit a further dichotomy "between those without design --belonging to men-- and those with design --belonging to women" (p. 232). At this point Lefferts picks up his theme concerning textiles and women, stating in the final paragraph of the book:

The analysis of the Tai textile traditions presented in this volume charts the power associated with Tai textiles and with women as their primary producers. In their gifts of cloth to monks and men, women are involved in establishing fundamental Tai social categories. Tai textiles help us to understand the complex relationships within Tai society and culture.

While this may be so, such a conclusion not only demonstrates the
value of delineating fields for study through a language family approach to textiles and Tai experience, but also highlights the limitations of these frameworks for cultural history. Although this volume attests the insights that analysis of textiles can yield in interpreting the subtle interrelations of women, men and monks in Tai Theravada Buddhism, its conclusions about Tai women as producers of textiles leave aside the phenomenon of exotic textiles acquired through trade. While these exotic textiles constitute primarily emblems of state and markers of status, as discussed in the chapter on textiles and royalty, their influence was presumably more pervasive, if only because they broadened the semiotic repertoire of textile form and patterning available to Tai producers at the same time as trade provided avenues to acquire textiles that were not necessarily dependent on Tai women or even relations with them.

In tracing so clearly the semiotics and significance of textiles in localised contexts within the region (in Part II) and in formulating broader hypotheses about textiles and Tai experience in Southeast Asia (in Part I), this splendid book not only paves the way for further research among Tai-speaking communities, but also challenges us to situate that experience in its own broader context of relations with non-Tai speaking peoples throughout the region.

References


Reviewed by Rapin Quinn Department of Human Geography RSPAS, ANU

This book provides a broad picture of non-government organisations (NGOs) and their activities in Thai development process covering the period from the "political change" in 1932 to the present. Interestingly, the authors try to show the relationship between the Thai government, NGOs and corporate firms and incorporate the study of "nonprofit sector" or NGO activities into the Southeast Asian
context. Outstandingly, the book illustrates the authors' hard work in collecting excellent first-hand data which are put together as appeared in the title of the book: Philanthropy, NGO Activities and Corporate Funding in Thailand. It includes five chapters. The history of philanthropy in Thailand is presented in Chapter 1; government policies towards philanthropy in Chapter 2; profile of nonprofit organisations in Chapter 3; profile of corporate funding in Thailand in Chapter 4; and the nonprofit sector in the 1990s: Thailand and the Southeast Asian context in Chapter 5.

However, the data can be re-interpreted and linked for insights into the actual role of Thai (indigenous) NGOs; their interactions among themselves and between the NGOs and other development actors namely officials, "the commoner" and private entrepreneurs and/or companies. The findings may be different from the conclusion on p. 140 which is too generalised in my view when the authors say:

Ideologies may be different, but sincerity and determination are factors that help strengthen nonprofit sectors throughout the world.

The data presented in this book do not allow the authors to make such a conclusion. One of the reasons is that the definition of NGO in this book is not clearly defined. Apparently, it broadly covers any entity which is not related to the Thai government. When applying to actual performances, I find it very difficult to be convinced that trade associations and other business lobby groups conduct their activities following philanthropic principles. I, therefore, keep asking myself throughout the book: who are these NGOs? The lack of differentiation diminishes not only the usefulness of various kinds of NGOs but also the opportunity for co-operation among them and with their development partners. It also creates confusion. In this regard, the hypothesis of "three thematic clusters" in a "capitalist society" (see Slater, 1989; Girling, 1987; Thrift and Forbes, 1986; and Urry, 1981) helps readers define NGOs by identifying their place in relation to other development actors as shown Fig. 1.

Figure 1 shows, at least, three different places in the cluster on which the NGOs can locate themselves. With regard to different places in which the NGOs are hypothesised, the roles of NGOs can be presumably different according to how they align themselves with other actors. For instance, having close relations with the government, the NGOs are more inclined to work in the area of social-welfare and relief handouts or socio-economic dimensions with a minimal challenge towards the government policies and practices. Many of them are guided by philanthropic notions. Closely aligned with business, the NGOs might work as advocates of the business albeit representing the universal value of social justice and equity. Korten (1990: 102-104) calls these NGOs "public service contractors" and Carroll (1992:12) refers to them as "non-profit business". The last category is the NGOs which work closely with the "commoners" in the sphere of civil society as grass-roots-support groups which are mentioned in the book as the "public-interest non-government organisations" (PINGOs). Their aim is to "strengthen the people's power" in the "politics of development" as argued by Gohler (1992). These NGOs claimed their
responses "to support people to help themselves" covering social, economic, cultural, technological, political and environmental dimensions. They are guided by the notions of philanthropy coupled with social and political reform. In order to achieve their aim, some small-scale and non-registered NGOs especially the political-oriented ones may tarnish the government's image both within the country and overseas if the "people's rights to development" are not recognised by the government. Chapter 5 of the book (pp. 123-138) refers to the last category of NGOs which I mention here.

The places of NGOs may help readers to understand the NGO roles in relation to development partners. The book points out distinctively that the "public-interest non-government organisations (PINGOs)" play an important role in the Thai development process. For instance, they lobby the government to conduct "radical reforms to enable the transfer of resources to the poorer sections of the society" (p. 26) and prevent the Thai political system from being interfered with by military leaders as evident in the "May crisis" in 1992 (pp. 47 and 68). The next questions are how these NGOs co-operate as well as countervail the power of the government and business; on what issues and which levels? These questions are probably among those which "PINGOs" have discussed for some time in their development of a "strategic vision" in carrying on their work.

References


Reviewed by Pierre van der Eng
The Australian National University
This is the first comprehensive textbook in English on economic development in contemporary Thailand since the re-publication of Ingram's classic Economic Change in Thailand 1850-1970 in 1971. A lot has happened since then. Economic growth accelerated to unprecedented levels, the Thai economy transformed from a largely agricultural economy, based on the exploitation of natural resources, into a middle-income economy, which is rapidly leaving its agricultural prevalence behind.

A lot has apparently happened to Thai economics as well. Whereas the study of economic change in Thailand used to be dominated by Westerners like James Ingram, T.H. Silcock, Paul Trescott and Dan Usher, this new book is largely written by a selection of Thailand's leading academics in the discipline, generally from the renowned Thammasat and Chulalongkorn universities. The clear advantage of this is that the book could be based on Thai scholarship published in Thai.

Apart from the long 80 page introduction by editor Peter Warr, the book contains 11 authoritative chapters on agriculture, manufacturing, services, monetary policy, fiscal policy, commercial banking, public enterprises, energy policy, education policy, labour markets and on poverty and income distribution. It accommodates a wealth of factual information and policy analyses, most of it related to the 1970s and 1980s, of which only some morsels can be discussed here.

The book is a testimony of Thailand's rapid economic change and very good development record during the last three decades. The policy objectives of high growth, price stability and external equilibrium may not be entirely compatible, but Thailand has maintained per capita growth of real income of about four percent per year, with a modest seven percent rate of inflation and a current account deficit of at most seven percent of GDP, leading to a moderate growth of external debt. Despite an increase in income inequality, poverty declined. An altogether good development performance.

What has triggered Thailand's success? The common denominator in the answers offered by the authors is that the management of the Thai economy has been conservative and professional. For instance, the chapter on monetary policy explains how the economy was 'fine tuned' with the lending rate of the central Bank of Thailand, while the chapter on fiscal policy elaborates how the Thai government maintained fiscal discipline.

Conservative economic management also largely explains why Thailand's unruly politics, spiced with several coups d'état, has had surprisingly little effect on economic policies and performance. The main upheavals were caused by factors outside the Thai economy, such as demand and price fluctuations in international commodity markets and the related demand for Thai products, and the appreciation of the Japanese Yen and a concomitant growth in the inflow of foreign investment.

Unfortunately, the book seeks to reach both general readers and specialists in the various topics covered by its chapters. The result
is a book which is too broad and too voluminous to appeal to all readers. The first category of readers may find most of the contributions too specialised. They are likely to stick to the integrating introductory chapter. Specialists may find that the discussions in the chapters about specific topics are too general, lacking relevant detail and presenting data which will very soon be outdated, because most of the chapters are based on data up to 1986, occasionally up to 1988 and 1990.

Moreover, the book conveys a wealth of empirical facts, but contains little attempts to put the book's in-depth assessment of the Thai experience during the recent decades in perspective. One missing perspective is the literature on Thai economic development. In the integrating first chapter the editor states: ' [...] a high proportion of it has fallen into two ideological and predictable forms of discussion' (p.2). One group allegedly looks only at the success of macro economic policies, the other finds very little that is positive in Thailand's economic growth, whereas the 'Thais themselves discuss all these issues, but in a less apocalyptic manner' (p.3). The available literature obviously deserves a more serious discussion. There is a host of publications which does not fall into these categories, while there are many publications in Thai which are highly ideological. The character of the literature is in the end not so important. What matters is what was actually written, and how the views in such past publications should be judged in retrospect.

The second perspective which comes off badly is the international literature on development theory. Surely the Thai experience contains some lessons which are relevant for other developing countries. Moreover, Thailand was not the only Asian country to experience rapid growth. Given the rapidly growing body of literature on what sets these Asian countries apart, the book's in-depth analysis of the Thai experience could have shed light on the arguments in this literature.

The third perspective which is treated with ambivalence is the historical perspective. The chapter on banking by Naris contains an admirable historical lead-up, but most authors do not seem to share the notion that the Thai economy of the 1960s had been shaped by its past. The editor's historical overview contains a reference to slow growth of GDP per capita before the 1950s and uses a discussion of political events to mark off broad phases of economic change (pp.9-19), but it is altogether inconsequential.

Perhaps a thoughtful discussion of Thai economic history would have added some factors to the explanation of the acceleration of economic change during recent decades, apart from the conservative and professional management of the Thai economy. Falkus (1991) identified two key differences between pre and post World War II Thailand: the construction of roads and the acceleration of population growth. The first ended the long-embedded isolation of provincial Thailand. The second ended a long period of underpopulation. Increasing population density in Central Thailand started to eat into the competitive edge which Thai rice producers had on the international rice market, necessitating the diversification of economic activity.
The opening up of remote areas and the acceleration of population growth were powerful forces, which must have continued to work up to the present. Perhaps they were more powerful in a long-term perspective than the conservative management of the economy, which may at best have created the preconditions for such forces to unleash their propitious impact on the Thai economy. After all, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the management of the prewar Thai economy was conservative, if not professional, but without the same effect.

Perhaps economic history should be left to economic historians. But their work and that of economists necessarily dovetails, as Pasuk and Samart appear to indicate in the chapter on the services sector with their use of international historical data on the sectoral composition of employment to assess the current situation in Thailand (pp.153-154). There are certainly several conclusions and indications in the book which are relevant to historical research.

For instance, Ammar et al. (pp.95, 110-111) mention that ex-post analyses of the productivity of irrigation investments found that productivity was low. Also, the standard ingredients of the Green Revolution hardly caught on in Thailand. This flies in the face of historians who have argued that the lack of commitment of the Thai government to the construction of irrigation works and to the development of seed-fertiliser technology in rice agriculture explains Thai prewar underdevelopment. (Feeny 1982: 171-179, Ingram 1971:87)

Another example is given by Sirilaksana on education (pp.329-330, 346-348) and by Chalongphob on labour (pp.397-398), who both state that in the informal sector education does not influence the wage and that there is no return from education. Some economic historians would argue that neglect of education helps to explain economic underdevelopment. Given the important historical role of the informal sector in the transformation of labour from agriculture to industry, this evidence makes one wonder whether there would have been a role for mass education have been at the early stages of Thai development.

Despite the issues raised in this review, the book is certainly the best available source on Thai economic development in the 1970s and 1980s and essential reading for those who want to familiarise themselves with the contemporary Thai economy.

References:


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This is one of a number of books forthcoming from the Gender Relations Project of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Sexual encounters and configurations: sites of desire/economies of pleasure in Asia and the Pacific*

**PART I: The Erotics of the Exotic**

*Margaret Jolly The Pacific as an erogenous zone: from Point Venus to Bali Hai*

*Adam Reed The discourses and strategies of sexuality in Papua: early colonial encounters in Massim Province*

*John D. Kelly Gaze and gasp: Indian bodies and colonial law in Fiji*

*Lenore Manderson Parables of imperialism and fantasies of the exotic: Western representations of Thailand, place and sex*

**PART II: Indigenous and Exogenous Desire**

*Jeffrey Clark Desire in the time of AIDS: Huli sexuality and the State*

*Peter A. Jackson Kathoey<gay><man: the emerging ternary model of male sex/gender roles in Thailand*

*Annette Hamilton Primal dream: masculinism, sin and salvation in Thailand's sex trade*

*Ann L. Stoler Foucault on children's sexuality and the bourgeois self: race and the domestic transgressions of empire*

**PART III: Disease and Desire in the Time of AIDS**

*Doug J. Porter A plague on the borders: HIV/AIDS and development in the Golden Triangle*

*Lisa Law Cultural specificity in Cebu's 'erogenous zones' implications for HIV infection*

*Sandra Buckley The foreign devil returns: packaging sexual practice and risk in contemporary Japan*

*The Encyclopedia of Thai Culture Bulletin Year 2 No 2, June 2537 has:

An interview with Khun Mana Waraphak, Manager 'business information' (saan sonthet thurakit) and administration, Thai Panich Bank.

The state of compiling an encyclopedia in China by Chaw Phongphichit

Oxford University CD ROM by Thawi Swangpanyangkoon

The Encyclopedia Project in the north by Somchot Ornsakul

The Encyclopedia Project in Central Thailand by the Thai Studies*
Institute,
Chulalongkorn

The Encyclopedia Project in Isarn by Dr Phich Somphong

A summary of the results and plan of the project in Isarn in 2537 by
the Office of the Isarn Cultural Encyclopedia.

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The Encyclopedia of Thai Culture Bulletin Year 2 No 2, June 2537 has:

An interview with Khun Mana Waraphak, Manager [Saan Sonthet Thurakit],
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The Encyclopedia Project in Isarn by Dr Phich Somphong

A summary of the results and plan of the project in Isarn in 2537 by the Office of the Isarn Cultural Encyclopedia.

* *

Thawi Swangpanyangkoon and Edward Robinson '108 Dehong Tai Proverbs'.

Published by The Thai Studies Institute Chulalongkorn University 2537
(Dehong Tai, Tai English) 24 pp.

'The writing system and the literature of the Black and White Tai'
(Akhara lae wannakam khong tai dam lae tai khaw) by Thawi
Swangpanyangkoon. Thai Studies Institute Thammasart University and

Tamra phasaa tai tai khong by Thawi Swangpanyangkoon and Saeng
Charoenphorn.

Thai Studies Institute, Chulalonglorn University 2537. 154 pp.

* * *

Conferences

The Thai-Yunnan project plans a one-day seminar on 20 January on
"Local and regional trade in Mainland Southeast Asia. I regret that
the Newsletter will not be in time to bring this notice to our
readers. Mosy participants are ANU students who have recently or are
conducted research on this and related topics. Participants are E.C.
Chapman, Mekhong Project, Philip Taylor, Vietnam, Andrew Walker Trans
mekhong trade, Rapin Quinn, NGOs and agricultural development and
local commerce in north Thailand, Niti Pawakapan, Traders on the
Burmese border, Tamerlaine Beasley 'The Friendship Bridge'
Gehan Wijeyewardene
Convenor

International Seminar on Tais of North East India and their relation
to other Tais of Southeast Asia and China

7-9 February 1995

Venue: Assam Tai Museum, Sibsagar, Assam, India

Organised by Ban-ok Pup-lik Muong-Tai, Purbanchal Tai Sahitya Sobha

Contact: Chao Puspa Gogoi, General Secretary, Purbanchal Tai Sahitya
Sobha, Chao Siba Buragohain Bhavan, Dhemaji 787057, Assam, India.

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TAI STUDIES CENTER
ANNUAL REPORT -- 1992-93

1. NETHERLANDS TRIP FOR UNPO CONFERENCE -- JANUARY ~993

Thomas Baccam, TSC President, and Bill Johnson, TSC Secretary, were
assigned to attend the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
(UNPO) which held its Third General Assembly in January 1993 at The
Hague, Netherlands. TSC was extended an invitation to attend the UNPO
assembly as an "observer." TSC's participation in this international
organization was very important since the Tai people in Northwest
Vietnam, even as a minority population, are not at the present time in
a position to represent themselves at UNPO. The TSC's main purpose was
to create awareness in the international community of the problems and
needs of the Tai people in NW Vietnam, and to learn more about UNPO.

2. VIETNAM TRIP FOR AGRO-FORESTRY PROJECTS -- FEBRUARY 1993

As a result of the Three-Point proposal, which TSC sent to Vietnam in
April, 1992, a delegation of agro-forestry experts was welcomed by
Vietnam to assess current problems in environment, forest degradation,
erosion, agriculture and food deficit among the Tai and other local
people in Northwest Vietnam. Led by Mr. Edward Murphy, an
environmentalist and Director of the Pathfinders Institute in New
York, a delegation visited Northwest Vietnam in February, 1993. The
other four delegates were: Dr. Keith Whigham, agronomist and Director
of the International Affairs Department of Iowa State University; Dr.
Uraivan Tan-Kim-Yong, forestry specialist and Director of the Resource
Management and Development Center in Thailand; Mr. Khamphong Baccam, a
Tai Dam and agronomist from France; and Miss Siang Bacshi, Executive
Director of the Tai Studies Center. The trip was financially supported
by Pioneer Hi-Bred International and the International Center for
During the trip, we made an unexpected but significant discovery: Vietnam's Ta Bu hydro-electric dam project, which would become Asia's largest dam. The proposed dam would be almost three times the size of the Hoa Binh Dam. It is expected to flood most of the inhabited territory of our ancient homeland, Sip Song Chau Tai. We were also told that one million households will be "resettled" if the dam is constructed. The TSC's next priority therefore, was to make the outside world aware of this coming disaster to the Tai race and culture in Northwest Vietnam.

3. THE FIRST TAI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE -- NOVEMBER 1993

The very first Tai International Conference was called and held in Des Moines, Iowa, on November 26 and 27, 1993. Tai representatives from overseas were as follows: Canada: Mr. Fahai Cam; Australia: Mr. Sonny (Pheuang) Baccam; and France: Mr. Sue Baccam, Mr. Khamvion Baccam, and Mr. Louis Danquoux. TSC and some Tai organizations in the USA were hosts and participants at this Conference. The main and urgent purpose of the conference was to discuss and draw the attention of the international community to the distressful situation in NW Vietnam, specifically the tragic death of 53 Tai people, which occurred in Sonla in October, and the enormous Ta Bu dam project, which will inundate most of the Tai Territory.

From that conference, a coalition of Tai overseas organizations was established and named: TAI SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL, a Coalition to protect the rights of the Tai people. Two resolutions were drawn up and submitted to the Government of Vietnam in February 1994 as: 1. that Vietnam abandon its plan to construct the Ta Bu Dam, and 2. that Vietnam identify the 53 victims in order that their relatives overseas may be notified and comforted.

TWO TAI STUDENTS FROM THAILAND - NOVEMBER 1993

After a two-year effort, two Tai female students from Thailand arrived in Des Moines, Iowa, on November 27, 1993 - Chathchaporn Sawnpiyooong (Oh Vi) and Patraporn Paisoon (Iew Cam). Both are now 18 years old and attending 10th and 11th grades respectively, at Dowling High School from which a year scholarship was granted. They are now living with their American host family: Todd and Melana Beuse in Windsor Heights (Des Moines Metro). They wish to finish high school and earn college degrees here if possible.

Their historical background: Like the Tai refugees who moved from the Tai Country into Laos in 1954, a group of Tai people moved from the Dien Bien Phu region into Thailand in 1880's as a result of the invasion of the colonial French armies. For over a century, they tried to live together and preserve their original Tai roots and heritage. Segregated in a small town named "Ban Napanat" in Loei Province, very few students go beyond high school for education, let alone studying abroad. To give them support, TSC hopes that this program will give them an opportunity to explore today's new world and go back to
develop and help their fellows in Thailand for a better life.

5. NORTHWEST VIETNAM STUDENTS' PROJECT

Since 1992, TSC has tried to get Tai students from Northwest Vietnam to come and study in American universities. The major study would be agriculture or forestry. Five student slots will be funded by private donors in the United States. We were told in Sonla, during our 1993 trip, that Sonla officials have sent a list of eight students to PACCOM in Hanoi for selection. We then discussed it with PACCOM when we arrived in Hanoi. Since then, TSC and ISU have sent many faxes about this concern but have not heard any response nor received any students' applications from PACCOM. TSC still hopes that this project will come true someday.

6. INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN SONLA PROVINCE

Miss Phayvanh Cam was selected by Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT) to go to Vietnam in 1993 for a two-month internship. The project will be funded and coordinated by PACT and TSC. Phayvanh had planned to stay in Sonla Province and assist Ms. Ascencion Martinez of the Australian Volunteers Abroad, at the Son La training Center for Nurses. Miss Phayvanh requested to go sometime in the fall of 1993, but the approval of the Vietnam entry visa came too late. So she missed the 1993 plan. Phayvanh is now applying again for a visa and permission to go and stay for two months in Sonla at the same project during this summer.

7. MEETING WITH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK -- APRIL 1994

As a result of the resolutions Tai Solidarity International (TSI) sent to Vietnam in February, 1994, TSI received an invitation to meet and discuss the issues with officials of the Vietnam Mission to the U.N. in New York, on April 8, 1994. TSI representatives were: Siang Bacchi, Thomas Baccam, Leunh Baccam, and Phimmachanh Baccam (from Iowa); and Environmentalist Edward Murphy and Civil Engineer Ashvin Shah (from New York). Officials of the Vietnam Mission were: Nguyen Dang Thuyen, First Secretary, and Le Manh Cuong, Third Secretary.

At the meeting, the Vietnamese officials stated that the Government of Vietnam has not decided on Ta Bu Dam project yet. Consultation with people and scientists will be needed before a final decision is made. Additionally, the National Assembly of Vietnam has recently passed the Law of Environmental Protection. The Government will take environmental factors as a criteria in deciding any project. In response to Mr. Shah's environmental comments, the Vietnamese officials suggested that international experts will be welcome to contribute their experience and expertise to the project. The meeting was short but productive.

8. TAI TEXT BOOK PROJECT

Beginning in February 1993, and funded by the federal Green Thumb Inc., Mr Rang Baccam has led a committee of composers and editors to
develop a Tai text book. This first book is designed to teach reading and writing the Tai script to beginners. The project if now accomplished as a complete draft. A committee of reviewers will be needed to finalize the book TSC hopes to send this special book for publication and distribution to Tai people worldwide in the very near future.

* Suvannabhumi Vol 6 No 1 Dec. 1994. (Newsletter of the Program for Southeast Asian Studies at Arizona State University)

This issue includes an account by Thomas John Hudak on his work on 'William J. Gedney's Language Research' which would be of interest to our readers. Gedney's research on Tai languages remained largely unpublished until Hudack began to compile, edit and publish this material with the aid of a National Science Foundation grant. Hudack presents a short sketch of the spread of these languages and an account of Gedney's research and data collecting procedures. He concludes,

This publication project is rapidly approaching completion. Volumes on Yay, Saek and the Tai dialect of Lungming have already been published. Two other volumes, one on the Southwestern dialects and another on the Central dialects are in press. A final volume on the Lue language will be completed in 1995. The final publication of these fieldnotes will make accessible to the scholarly community all of the data Gedney has compiled over a long and full career.

I think all readers will associate themselves with thanks and best wishes to Hudak for his efforts.

* Professor Jane R. Hanks has sent us the following cutting which was found in her mother's (Maud Wilkinson Richardson of Berkeley, California) papers. Jane Hanks says the clipping dates from 1886-7 or, even earlier as a clipping dated 1876 was found in the batch from which it came.

The San Francisco Bulletin
Lessons in civilization that one can teach the other.

Special to the The Bulletin
New York, Aug. 1. - Prince Deracougz Varopraker, brother of the King of Siam, who arrived yesterday has been interviewed. He was asked his views as to how European civilization compares with Siamese, and gave the following characteristic answer: 'I think taht it is only in the ruder, external adjuncts that civilization has advanced beyond the East. I marvel at the wonderful mechanical improvements of Occidental life, the endless contrivances to enhance the pleasure of living, at the multitude of conveniences and elaborate luxuries, but you have not a whit more of the essence of civilization than has existed for centuries in the Far East. There may be more knowledge here, but no more wisdom in that high civilization that means purity in personal living, rectitude of public life, the pursuit of art for art's sake, the understanding of man's duty to his fellow-men and to his God, the study of problems the solution of which tend to the most good for the greatest number. In all these things that make up our conception of civilization. I believe we are fully on a level with the Western
World. I think we can mlearn here how to better cultivate our fields. I think the men of the West might learn a trifle from us in the cultivation of our minds. Perhaps the exchange would not be more than even, and plainly neither of us would suffer by it. Many problems are yet to be wrought out by this New World. We, on the other hand, solved them centuries ago and live content with their solution. There is much that is good here - do not understand me to deny that much that will inure to the profit of those countries of the East that do not close their eyes to the suggestions of the West'. The Prince will return to Asia via San Francisco.

The item is reproduced as printed. Presumably the person in the report was Prince Devawongse who was Foreign Minister for both King Chulalongkorn (his brother) and King Vajiravudh, and at the time of the outbreak of World war 1. (see Wyatt Thailand: a short history 1984:197) He was associated in a number of reform measures including the move to improve the status of women by encouraging monogamy. It would be interesting to speculate if he, as Foreign Minister, would today see 'constructive engagement' and continuing friendship with the Khmer Rouge as 'understanding man's duty to his fellow men'.

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Publications du centre d'histoire et civilisations de la peninsule indochinoise has just released


Khamphng Ketavong 'Bilan des activits de l'INRAL, de l'IRAL, de l'IRALL et de L'IRC

Khamphao Phonekeo 'Les recherches sur la gograohie du Laos'

Michel ferlus 'Les recherches linguistiques au Laos

Pierre-Bernard Lafont 'Les recherches sur les religions du Laos: Bilan et perspectives'

Savng Phinith 'La recherche ethnologiques au Laos: Pass et prsent'

Souvannarath Saignavong 'Les tudes sur les droits et les codes du Laos'

Bounthieng Siripapanh 'Les recherches sur les arts du Laos'

Bernard Gay 'Les recerches francaises sur l'histoire du Laos
Gilles Delouche 'Les tudes sur la litterature lao en France'

Martin Stuart-Fox 'Les tudes sur le Laos en Australie'

Yang baoyun 'La Chine et les recherches en sciences humaines sur le Laos'

Sachidanand sahai 'Les recherches indienne en sciences humaines sur le Laos'

Joseph J. Zasloff 'Le laos et les tudes americaines le politologie, 1954-1993'

Arthur Dommen 'Les recherches sur le Laos aux Etats-Unis'

Alexis Filimonov 'Les recherches sur le Laos en URSS et en Russie'

Yoshiaki Ishizawa 'Le Lapon et les tudes sur le Laos'

Mana Malapetch 'La Thailande et les recherches sur le Laos'

Nguyen Th Anh 'Les recherches sur le Laos: Confrontation des methodologies'


Early in 1994 this book appeared to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of this program. The papers in the volume are:

Boel Billgren 'a new wave of internationalization'
Peter Bryder Worldwide cooperation on Manichaeism'
Inga-Lill Hansson 'The wonderful world of Akha'
Magnus Nordenhake 'The first Chinese Swedish dictionary'
Christer Gunnarsson/Hans Holm 'Is there an East-asian model?'
Anne Jerneck 'On the changing role of the Vietnamese state'
Jon Sigurdson 'Is Japan becoming no.2?'
Somboon Siriprachai 'Problems in the industrialization process in Thailand'
Sven Bjrk 'The Hongyuan wetland research project
Rolf Carlsson 'Green biomass for food and industrial products'
Ulf Helln 'Is there desertification in Asia?'
Wang Yue 'Let us study environmental changes'
Douglas Bratthall 'Preventing dental caries in Asia'
Ingemar Ingemarsson/Sven Montan 'High blood pressure in pregnancy and breech delivery'
Barbro Johansson 'What illnesses do they have in Asia?'
Maria Nystrm 'No smoke without fire?'
Hkan Lundstrm 'Musical change of the Kammu in Laos'
Jan-jvind Swahn 'Story-telling: Who told what to whom?'
Damrong Tayanin 'Divination by chicken bones'
Mason Hoadley "Feudalization" of Central Java

Thematic research project

From Edibles to Ecstasy
Stimulants and dream-inducing substances in Southeast Asia

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION: Collection GRAND SUD
(Prince of Songkla University Press, Thailand)

Project coordinators:

Philippe Le Failler in collaboration with Annie Hubert
Title: From Edibles to Ecstasy, A comparative study of stimulants and dream-inducing substances in Southeast Asia

Research objectives: To gather, for Southeast Asia, the largest possible collection of descriptions and analyses on the usage of comestibles used for non-nutritive and non-medical purposes, including drugs (in the most current understanding of the term). It is not, therefore, a catalogue of herbs, spices and condiments but rather of a more limited variety of products that bring pleasure or intoxication to humans. Whether it be a habit or the quest for an artificial paradise strictly speaking, all substances interest us and this set of studies aims at grasping the diversity of substances, the degree of usage, and the understanding of each.

One of the most important goals of such a work is to understand, for the same range of products, the society's acceptance or rejection of its use and, possibly, to reflect upon the conflicts engendered concerning these substances by the evolution of attitudes. The multiplicity of substances, of societies and the diachronic dimension will allow us to form a unique picture of the whole, the results of a comparative synthesis presented in a collective work.

The substances. The range is quite extensive: anything which, without having a notable nutritive role, is sniffed, chewed, smoked, drunk or ingested for pleasure; the social conventions; the rituals; or the escapism. As an example from among the best known of these, we could cite opium, which at once is ingested, smoked, chewed, and mixed for purposes ranging from pharmaceutical use to addiction and including along the way, initiation rites. This substance illustrates perfectly the differences of perception according to the research perspective of the observers. An agronomist can see there the distinctive features of a particular kind of farming; an economist will stress scarce resources and financial stakes; a sociologist or an anthropologist, evidence of an acceptance of the drug in the particular context of a social group in explaining when and how one smokes or ingests it; a linguist, on the path of the drug through the study of the terminology used; and a historian will deal with, perhaps, in perspective, a geopolitical stake, symbol of power or resistance.

This example, as a model for looking at substances as varied as tobacco, alcohol, betel leaf and areca-nut, datura, cloves, tea, etc., allows us to envisage a picture of the whole, an article containing the knowledge of each contributor within a broad, overall
understanding. And in any case, this work allows us to draw up a
typology ranging from incense to poison.

Method: If possible, each of the main substances in use in Southeast
Asia, along with as many as possible of the important societies (which
may coexist within the same country), will be represented in the
resulting book. It seems necessary to have articles as diversified as
possible on the following countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia,
Burma/Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, but also, to broaden
the area of understanding, India, China.

All researchers, whatever their training—historians, linguists,
anthropologists, botanists, jurists (the list is unlimited)—are invited
to send their article proposals, but also the subjects that they would
like to see dealt with

This call for contributions is addressed to researchers and institutes
in Europe, North America, Australia and Asia. Articles will be
accepted in either English or French.

We ask that each participant send us, in advance, the theme, the
period covered and the type of study chosen so that we can advance the
most original (or complementary) of the proposed analyses.

Each article can be accompanied by a map and/or graphics and tables.
Drawings and photographs are welcome (numbered, with captions, on the
back; with an indication of the desired placement in the text). These
illustrative documents will be returned to the authors with the care
and attention of the editorial committee when the publication is
issued.

For the names of substances or instruments, please indicate the mode
of transcription chosen: literal transcription (written languages),
phonological transcription, or international phonetic transcription
(IPA).

The deadline for receipt of contributions is 30 April 1995.
For further information, we are available at :
cc33 - 42 95 16 60; fax: cc33 - 42 20 82 10 (Aix-en-Provence, France)
or contact Philippe Le Failler RSPAS ANU room 4224 Coombs building, ANU
(for form see over)
* **

Opration de Recherche Thmatique
De Poids et de Mesures en Asie du Sud-Est: Systmes mtrologiques et
socits

APPEL A CONTRIBUTION
PUBLICATION PRVUE:
Collection "Grand Sud"
(Prince of Songkla University Press)
Coordinateur:
Franois Robinne
Responsables de l'opration:
Jacques Ivanoff, Pierre Le Roux,
François Robinne
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Université de Provence, Institut de Recherche sur le Sud-Est-Asiatique (IRSEA)
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This issue of the Newsletter is jointly edited by Scot Bamber and Gehan Wijeyewardene and published in the Department of Anthropology, RSPAS, The Australian National University.
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1 Paper presented to the seminar on Tai ethnicity, Department of Anthropology, RSPAS, ANU on 30 August 1994.

2 The authors also confirm my argument on p. 105 by saying that "Many firms consciously make donations and support activities that will give the firm a good image".

3 Classified by Korten as "participatory-development" NGOs and by Carroll as "development-support" NGOs.

4 In early time, the governments under the military regime would not tolerate any kind of social movement. Since the 1980s, the governments under the "democratic" regime have extended their tolerance to accept social criticisms made by these NGOs.

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