CHAPTER TWO

THE NORTHERN STATES OF SIAM

Geography

The once independent northern states of Siam were situated on the periphery of the Kingdom and some distance from the core region of the central administration in Bangkok. Of significance is the fact that the northern states were located between two warring states, Burma to the west and Siam to the south. This being the case, the northern states served as a buffer between the two kingdoms. In its buffer position, the northern states became a source of contention between the two adversaries. Within the environment of a turbulent frontier, the northern states evolved some distinct features.

Comprising Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Chiang Rai, Phayao and Mae Hong Son[1], these states evolved out of the ancient Kingdom of Lan Na (1296-1558 A.D). Chiang Mai was the administrative centre and the capital of the northern states of Siam.

Situated far from the sea and in a mountainous region, the northern states bordered Shan states to the north and west,[2] Lao states of the Mekong river to the east, Siam to the south and Burma to the southwest. The different northern states were geographically demarcated by mountains and river valleys.[3] As mentioned earlier (see Introduction), at the valleys along the banks of the Me Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan, were situated five closely linked yet independent states or principalities *(muang)*, namely, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan.

With each *muang* located in a different river valley, the northern states did not

develop into a unified kingdom. Each state enjoyed considerable autonomy with little interference from neighbouring states.[4]

The rivers served as the only means of transportation. The river basins also provided fertile ground for cultivation and settlement. The Menam Chao Phraya and its tributaries in the north linked the northern and central region. However, until about the early nineteenth century, the rapids along all these streams acted as an effectual barrier in keeping apart the northern and southern states. An American Presbyterian missionary, Daniel McGilvary, who was stationed at Chiang Mai from the late 1860's, made the following observation:

> ... very little was known in Bangkok about the Lao provinces of the north. A trip from Bangkok to Cheangmai seemed then like going out of the world.[5]

In Siam, the Chao Phraya basin served as a source of life for a prosperous agrarian economy and provided the foundation for a political system. The Chao Phraya basin covered a large area comprising both the central and southern regions. At the heart of the basin is the river Chao Phraya which is until today referred to as the "lifeline of Siam". The Menam Chao Phraya runs its course throughout the central region. Its tributaries to the north, the Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan which housed the five Siamese tributary states in the north, water a large part of the northern region.

Early History

The northern states of Siam, as mentioned earlier, were once part of the Kingdom of Lan Na which was established in 1296 A.D. From the date of its

establishment up to the nineteenth century, the Kingdom of Lan Na went through significant political changes. At first, it was an independent kingdom. In 1556, however, Chiang Mai, the capital city of Lan Na, was invaded by King Bayinnaung of Burma.[6] Thereafter, Lan Na became, intermittently, a vassal of the Court of Ava for more than two hundred years. There were occasions during this period when Lan Na was able to break away from Burmese hold and discontinue its vassalage to the Court of Ava.

The Kingdom of Lan Na was founded by King Mangrai. Born in 1239[7], he was a prince from the ruling family at Chiang Saen. In 1259, Mangrai succeeded to the throne as ruler of Chiang Saen.

King Mangrai was an expansionist. In 1289, he extended his kingdom by conquering Pegu which was the capital of the Mons in Lower Burma. As a result of the conquest, a daughter of the King of Pegu was presented to Mangrai. This resulted in a marriage alliance between Mangrai and the former. The marriage had far-reaching implications. It is claimed that, from that time onwards, the Yuan (people of northern Siam), Tai (people of central and southern Siam) and Mons (people of Pegu) "formed a single people".[8]

In 1292, Mangrai conquered the Mon Kingdom of Lamphun. The Theravada-Buddhist culture of Lamphun soon came to be adopted by the Tai Yuan of northern Siam. Four years after the conquest of Lamphun, in 1296, King Mangrai established his residence at Chiang Mai or the "new city". From then onwards, Mangrai's kingdom came to be known by its extent, encompassing "one million rice fields" or "*lan na*". Thus Mangrai's kingdom was called the Kingdom of Lan Na and

Chiang Mai became its capital city.

Mangrai ruled over a highly diverse population. A large number of them comprised Mon; there was also a significant number of Lawa, some Tai and other tribal people.[9] The heterogenity of Lan Na Thai social structure gradually evolved into what was commonly referred to as the people of northern Siam.

From the second quarter of the sixteenth century, Lan Na Thai went through a series of internal feuds which affected the line of succession. This in turn led to political instability and, eventually, the decline of the kingdom. Burma was alert to take advantage of the waning power of Lan Na. The Burmese attacked and occupied Lan Na, ruling it, but not continuously, for more than two hundred years, between 1556 and 1774.

Apart from the Kingdom of Lan Na, the Burmese were also interested in conquering Ayutthaya in the south. One of the Burmese military strategies was to attack Ayutthaya from the north by conquering Chiang Mai first. The 1762 attack on Chiang Mai was particularly significant. The Burmese intended to annex the northern states (Kingdom of Lan Na) and, thereafter, the whole of Siam (Kingdom of Ayutthaya). The first part of their strategy was to occupy Chiang Mai which they did in 1762. In Chiang Mai, the Burmese gathered additional troops, ammunition and food supplies. The occupation of Chiang Mai was an important move in the Burmese plan as it allowed them to encircle Ayutthaya from the north. Ayutthaya fell to the Burmese on April 7, 1767.[10]

But it was not long before the Siamese rallied to counter-attack and regain possession of the place. In 1773, the Siamese general, Taksin, and a northern Prince

from Lampang, Kawila, defeated the Burmese and recaptured Chiang Mai. Not long after, Kawila was made ruler of Chiang Mai. From then on, most of the northern states were reclaimed and, one by one, they acknowledged allegiance to Siam under the rule of Taksin.

For almost twenty years following the reoccupation of Chiang Mai, the northern states remained underpopulated and economically backward. As a result of the war with Burma, many of the inhabitants of Chiang Mai and its neighbouring areas had fled to the hills and forests. One of the first tasks of Kawila was the repopulation of Chiang Mai. Raids on neighbouring villages were undertaken by him and other chiefs of the northern states to obtain men and resettle them in the northern *muangs*. Hence the saying "put vegetables in baskets and men in towns" or "*kep phak sai sa, kep kha sai muang*" came to be used in reference to the period of forced resettlement in the history of the northern states of Siam. In 1796, Chiang Mai was declared capital once again and a gradual reconstruction of the town took place from then on. This is why the year 1796 is sometimes acknowledged as the date of the founding of Chiang Mai.

Beginning from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the northern states became Siamese *prathetsarat* and owed allegiance to Bangkok. At the turn of the twentieth century, these states were incorporated into the Kingdom of Siam.[11]

The Five Muangs

Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan were the five tributary *muangs* of the Kingdom of Siam. Located in the valleys of the Chao Phraya's tributaries in the

north, namely the Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan, they were all originally independent and each contained several minor dependencies. The following are brief observations about the five *muangs*.

Chiang Mai was founded by King Mangrai in 1296 A.D. From the date of its founding and until the middle of the sixteenth century, Chiang Mai served as the capital of the Kingdom of Lan Na. In 1556, Chiang Mai was invaded by Burmese troops and, as a result, for the next two hundred years, at intermittent intervals, it was a tributary of the Court of Burma. But, since 1796, Chiang Mai has remained the provincial capital and administrative centre of the northern states.

In 1869, S.H. Poole, a surveyor who travelled from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, reported that Chiang Mai was situated about five hundred yards from the banks of the Me Ping.[12] For many who know her history, it is considered appropriate that Chiang Mai became known as *Nopburi Sri Nakawn Ping Chiang Mai* or "new town on the river Ping".[13] It was also through the Me Ping that communication was maintained between Chiang Mai and Bangkok throughout the year. But riverine communication between the two towns depended on the level of water in the rivers. There were, unavoidably, periodic difficulties. It was, at any rate, the only available mode of communication.

Chiang Mai was a city that was fortified with brick walls.[14] The remains of the walls can still be seen today. The walls of the city, sometimes referred to as "the gates to the city", are surrounded by a large moat.

Lamphun originated from the Kingdom of Haripunjaya in the north. It was an off-shoot of the ancient Tai Dvaravati kingdom in the lower valleys of the Menam Chao

Phraya. Haripunjaya was a Buddhist Mon Kingdom. It was founded by a sage named Vasudeva in 566 A.D. (1204 C.S or the Lesser Burmese Era).[15] In the following year, Princess Camadevi from the city of Lava (present day Lopburi) established her reign at Haripunjaya[16] which remained an independent kingdom until it was annexed by King Mangrai.

Unlike the Kingdom of Lan Na which received Theravada Buddhism only in the late fourteenth century, Haripunjaya was a Theravada Buddhist kingdom from the date of its founding. In the year 1292, accompanied by an army of "twelve hundred thousand troops", Mangrai conquered the Kingdom of Haripunjaya.[17] The capture of Haripunjaya, in fact, meant that the centre of Mon Theravada Buddhist culture was captured as well. Even before the defeat of Haripunjaya, Theravada Buddhism had penetrated into the neighbouring provinces of the Tai Yuan, which had hitherto escaped both Hindu and Buddhist influence. The capture of Lamphun by the ruler of Lan Na marked the complete conversion of the Tai Yuan to Buddhism. From then on, Mangrai and his successors became supporters of Buddhism and acquired the doctrines of Theravada Buddhism from the conquered kingdom of Lamphun which has been recognised as the forerunner of the Buddhist Kingdom of Lan Na.[18] This interpretation is derived from a *tamnan* (stories related to Buddhism) called the *Mulasasana* which gives an account of the origins of Buddhism in the region.

Lampang was founded in a valley on the Me Wang. According to the *Jinakalamalipakaranam,*[19] another historical text belonging to the *tamnan* genre, Lampang was founded in 1310. In 1732, Lampang was a small and independent principality. In the eighteenth century, the ruling families of Lampang and Lamphun

were engaged in a feud. A certain Nai Thip Chang intervened to put an end to the feud. Nai Thip expelled the despotic ruler of Lampang and ascended its throne assuming the title of Phraya Sulawa. In order to maintain good relations with Burma, Sulawa accepted Burmese suzerainty. Phraya Sulawa reigned between 1732 and 1759. He died in 1759, leaving behind four sons. One of the four sons had seven sons of his own. Kawila, born in 1742, was the eldest of the seven sons. In later years, some of the descendents of Phraya Sulawa became Chiefs of Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang.

In 1770, Kawila, reigned as the Chief of Lampang. In 1773/4, he joined Phya Chaban of Chiang Mai and plotted against the Burmese. Aided by the Siamese army from the south which was led by its Commander, Phraya Chakri (later King Rama I), Kawila defeated the Burmese and reclaimed Chiang Mai. Kawila's contribution was aptly rewarded when he was conferred the position of Chao Phraya of Chiang Mai, a vassal state of Bangkok in 1782. Kawila was one of the most feared and revered Chiefs of Chiang Mai. He reigned from 1782 to 1813.

Nan was located in the valley of the Me Nan. It was an independent state until King Tilok of Chiang Mai captured it. From then onwards, Nan came under the rule of Chiang Mai. The *Jinakalamalipakaranam* recorded the date of the invasion as 1488.[20] Camille Notton's French description of "Histoire de Xieng Mai" in Annales du Siam, however, gives the date of Tilok's expedition against Nan as 1443/44.[21] Nan which had been under the rule of Chiang Mai since 1488 became a vassal of Burma when Chiang Mai was conquered by the Prince of Pegu.

Until 1726, Nan was ruled by a governor and it had no ruling prince. In 1726, the governor and the ruling elders of Nan invited the Prince of Chiang Mai to rule over Nan. The response from the Prince of Chiang Mai is worthy of attention because it provides an illustration of the manner in which a vassal state accorded honour to its overlord.

The Prince of Chiang Mai, when approached by the delegation from Nan, first consulted and sought the approval of his overlord, the King of Ava. Only after the King had consented did the Prince accept the invitation from Nan. In the same year (1726), Chao Phraya Tin was sent to begin his rule at Nan. This was the beginning of the reign of ruling princes in Nan, and Chao Phraya Luang Tin was the "first of the clan of ruling princes of Nan".[22] Chao Phraya Tin ruled over Nan between 1726 and 1753. In 1754, his eldest son, Chao Ariyawong, became the ruler of Nan.

Ariyawong had ruled Nan for seven years when in 1760, the Kingdom of Lan Na, led by Chiang Mai and Chiang Saen, revolted against the King of Burma. However, in not less than five months of battle, Chiang Mai was defeated. The Burmese then proceeded to claim Lampang, Phrae and Nan before returning to Ava in the same year. Between 1762 and 1765, the Burmese gathered additional forces from all the 57 towns in Lan Na in preparation for an attack on Ayutthaya in the south. In 1767, with additional troops gathered from all of Lan Na, the Burmese attacked and defeated Ayutthaya. In 1768, the Burmese appointed Chao Nai Ai, governor of Nan. However, soon afterwards, inspired by the rise and strength of the Siamese General Taksin in the south, and unable to endure further Burmese atrocities, the northern states revolted against Burma and sought alliance with Siam.

In 1788, Nan came under the suzerainty of Siam. That same year, the ruling prince of Nan paid an official visit to the King in Bangkok. The Siamese King officially appointed him `Ruler of Nan'.

Phrae is located on the bank of the Me Yom. It shares a similar tradition with Nan in that they were both attacked by Chiang Mai during the reign of Tilok. In the same year that King Tilok led an attack on Nan, his mother, Princess Mahadevi, was sent to besiege Phrae.[23] The Governor of Phrae, a female called Thao Mehkun, fought hard but eventually submitted to the invading forces from Chiang Mai.

Ethnicity

Kawila, the Chief of Chiang Mai rebuilt his *muang*, an impoverished state with a thin population that came to be his realm, by repopulation. The state itself was rebuilt in the following decades after Chiang Mai had been completely rid of Burmese control.

The forced campaigns towards resettlement launched by Kawila in the north, to some extent, exemplified the importance of manpower control over extent of territory. Between 1782 and 1813, his campaigns against petty Shan states to the north resulted in a large number of the population being resettled in Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang. A state with a large manpower base was essential to accelerate the revival of its politics and economy. Kawila's manpower raids, secured by extensive military measures, served to meet this end.[24]

As a result of the forced resettlement campaigns, the Tai Yuan who were the majority of the inhabitants of northern Siam were joined by other Tai groups. The Tai Lue (from southern China), Ngiows (from the Shan States) and the Tai Khoen (from

Keng Tung) were among the groups resettled in the northern states, hence there was ethnic plurality in that region.

Some of these groups left their homeland willingly and resettled in Yuan areas in northern Siam. The migrants and war captives who were resettled in the Lan Na area tended to give their new villages names that reminded them of their homeland. The villages also reflected the beliefs, rituals and traditions of their homeland. For instance, there were villages in and around Chiang Mai with names such as Muang Sad, Muang Kai, Muang Len, Muang Lai and Muang Yong. These were names of Tai Lue, Khoen (Khun), Yong or Tai Yai settlements in their original homes.[25] These people were resettled in Chiang Mai and became northern Thais from the nineteenth century.

Sir Robert Schomburgk's account of his visit to Chiang Mai in the year 1859 provides a useful description of the population of Chiang Mai. Schomburgk, a British Consul at Bangkok and the second Westerner to have undertaken the five hundred mile journey between Bangkok and Chiang Mai,[26] wrote:

> They were a medley crowd. The true Laos in turbaned kerchief, with his tartar-like khatung, worn as the Scotch wear their plaid; the Thai or Siamese merely girdled round the loins; the fat smiling Chinese in his blue vestment, and to make the medley still more conspicuous there were likewise inhabitants from Muang Teli in the Chinese province of Yunnan, a caravan of which had arrived a day or two previously; all these people added to the peculiarity of the scene before us.[27]

The above highlights the multi-ethnic community in Chiang Mai in the 1850's. There were various other ethnic groups residing in Chiang Mai. These included the Tai Yai, Tai Lue, Mon, Burmese and Karen.[28] The Tai Yai (sometimes spelt Tai Yay) are referred to in local term as the Ngiow. The Ngiows originated from the western Shan

States and their economic specializations were the making of cooking pots and tanning. The Tai Lue's original homeland was in Sipsong Panna and Kengtung. The Mons were from Pegu and the Burmese and Karens were from Burma. The last two mentioned were foresters in the timber industry in Burma and northern Siam.[29]

The word "Tai" is a generic term used to refer to the people of the Tai race. They originated from southern China. There were various divisions of the Tai race. They had different names and were distributed in different areas. In Upper Burma there were the Tai Yai and Tai Khoen. "Dai" is the *pinyin* spelling of the same term "Tai" and it is used by the Chinese to refer to speakers of the southwestern branch of languages living in China.[30]

The northern *muangs*, particularly Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan, were often referred to as the Western Lao region by Europeans.[31] But why were these states called "Lao"?

Until the turn of the twentieth century, the Siamese in the central plains commonly referred to the people in the northern tributary states as Lao, just as they called the people of the north-east and the people of the Kingdom of Laos. The term "Lao" is in fact of Siamese origin and refers to the Tai speakers to the north and north-east of the Chao Phraya plains.

A few characteristics of the Lao distinguished them from the Siamese of the central plains. Some of these distinguishing characteristics included the Laos' preference for glutinous rice and differences in the style of their Buddhist architecture and religious script. Also, the Lao states of the north and north-east shared a historical and cultural tradition with the various principalities in the middle Mekong basin.[32]

But the northerners, "for some unexplained reason",[33] disliked being called Lao. The local term adopted by the people of the north was Tai Yuan, which was the original tribal name of the majority of the inhabitants of the northern states.

It must be pointed out that there were also other tribal groups such as the Lawa, who were the earliest known inhabitants of northern Siam. In fact, the Lawa belong to an ancient Tai race which was predominant in China, particularly in Yunnan. The Lawa (also called Lua) later migrated to the south and settled in the Shan States and the northern states of Siam.

Lucien M. Hanks provided another explanation about the predominant tribal group in northern Siam, the Tai Yuan. According to Hanks, the Tai Yuan called themselves *khon muang* (people of the town) and spoke *kham muang* (language of the town).[34]

The Tai Yuan were in fact descendants of the people who moved into the Lan Na area which was the original home of the Lawa (Lua). In other words, the Lawa were the predominant group in the north before the arrival of the Yuan. The Tai Yuan who later ruled Lan Na were thought to have come from outside the area. The difference between the Lawa and Yuan was that the Lawa lived on the hills while the Yuan lived in the lowlands. The Lawa appeared to have accepted Yuan supremacy over them when the latter ruled the Lan Na kingdom.

In his study, Suthep Soonthornpasuch, an anthropologist, states that the Tai Yuan area comprised the vassal states of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan.[35] As such, it may not be inappropriate to call the people of these states *khon muang,* as they had commonly called themselves. Furthermore, scholars like Lucien M.

Hanks use the term Yuan (*khon muang*) interchangeably with the term northern Thai.

Hanks also defined the Yuan, Lao and Siamese in terms of their territorial belonging and their physical features. According to Hanks, the people of northern Siam are the Tai Yuan. The people of northeastern Siam, on the other hand, are the Tai Lao. The people residing in central and southern Siam are called the Siamese (Tai)[36] or *khon tai* meaning literally "southerners".

The third group of people are distinct from the first two in physique and colour. The Siamese (Tai) in the central and southern parts are darker and larger in built. They are also speakers of Siamese (Tai), the central dialect, which is different from the northern or north-eastern dialect.

For the purpose of this study, the people of the five northern tributary states of Siam would be called the *khon muang* or northern Thai.

From Burmese Vassal to Siamese Prathetsarat

Between 1556 and 1774, it may be reiterated, the northern states were vassals of the Court of Ava. They owed allegiance to Burma intermittently for more than two hundred years. In other words, there were periods during this time when the northern states momentarily regained their independence but, when attacked, resumed their position as vassals of Burma.

By the close of the eighteenth century, however, most of the northern states had acknowledged Siamese suzerainty. There were a few reasons which contributed to the shift of allegiance to Bangkok. Military considerations were the most important.

Internal problems arose in the Burmese homeland just as it was approaching the tail end of its war with Ayutthaya. Between 1766 and 1769, the Chinese governor at Yunnan launched four expeditions against Burma. The military activities of the Burmese army in the Shan states, bordering Chinese territories to the south, prompted these invasions.[37] According to the Burmese account, as recorded in the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi,* the war with China arose as a result of misunderstanding between Chinese merchants and Burmese officials[38] in the towns which were located along the trade route between Burma and China. The source, however, does not elaborate on the exact nature of the misunderstanding although it provides details on the four attacks that took place. The war occurred at Burma's northern border in the region of Upper Burma. All four attacks were successfully repulsed by the Burmese army. Nonetheless, the war ended on a conciliatory note. A peace treaty was signed between the Burmese and Chinese officers in December, 1769. The Chinese troops were allowed to withdraw and trade was to be restored.

When news of the peaceful settlement between the two warring parties reached the Burmese King, he reacted disapprovingly because the settlement was concluded without his consent. What really annoyed the King was the fact that the Burmese officers had, after accepting presents given by the enemies, allowed the defeated Chinese army to retreat into Chinese territory when it was well within the power of the Burmese to capture and bring their adversaries to the capital as prisoners of war.[39] It was some time before the angry King consented to pardon the officials who were involved in the signing of the Treaty. Eventually, both sovereigns agreed to send missions to each other to prevent further misunderstanding in the future.[40]

Although the Chinese threat on its northern border was overcome by the Burmese forces, the war itself took its toll on Burmese manpower and morale. Involvement in this war left Burma weak in terms of manpower and supplies. The large number of deaths and widespread starvation crippled Burma's ability to administer effectively its newly acquired possession, the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. Burmese historians claim that Alaungpaya and his successor's wars with Siam from 1759 onwards left the Burmese side weak.[41]

The declining influence of the court of Burma resulted in its inability to provide vassal states the protection and military support that the latter were traditionally accustomed to. The weak position of the patron state prompted vassal states to declare independence from the former and seek stronger patrons.

Taksin who became King after defeating the remaining Burmese garrisons on the western side of central Siam was the obvious choice as a strong patron. While the Burmese were kept busy and distracted by the war with China, Taksin took the opportunity to restore the influence of the past Kingdom of Ayutthaya by reclaiming most of its vassal states. Siamese influence in Cambodia was restored by 1779. In the north, Chiang Mai was recaptured from Burmese hold by 1773. One by one, the reclaimed states accepted Siamese suzerainty.

The most important consideration for the change of allegiance was, therefore, Siam's renewed strength as opposed to Burma's decline. A passage from the Burmese *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* clearly indicates this point. According to this source,

> The successes [gained by Taksin against the Burmese] had also the effect of inclining the Lao Chiefs of Northern Siam, who were never truly loyal to the Burmese sovereign, to sever their undesirable connection with Burma and throw in their lot with Siam.[42]

Siam under Taksin and, later, Phraya Chakri, emerged as a powerful kingdom. Vassal states, situated far from the centre, needed military protection from patron states against attacks from neighbouring states. In the case of the northern states, attacks from Burma and Indochina were a constant threat to their security.

However, a northern Thai scholar, Ratanaporn Sethakul, suggests that Bangkok's policy of appeasement towards the northern states throughout the early Bangkok period was a crucial factor leading to the change of allegiance.[43] Ratanaporn does not, however, elaborate on this point. Why did Bangkok adopt a policy of appeasement towards the northern states?

The occupation of Chiang Mai (north) in 1762, before the attack on Ayutthaya (south) in 1767, alerted the Siamese to the strategic importance of Chiang Mai. A similar incident had taken place following the attack of Burma's King Bayinnaung on Lan Na in 1556. In both cases, Chiang Mai was used as a base to acquire food and other essential supplies for the Burmese troops. Additional troops were also recruited from among the people of northern Siam to fight in the war against Ayutthaya. The Siamese feared that history might be repeated or that Chiang Mai might be provoked to revolt against the Siamese, should Bangkok appear unfriendly or oppressive. The grim reminder of Chiang Mai as a bridgehead in the past is a plausible explanation for Bangkok's cordial attitude towards the north.

Siamese prathetsarat

As explained above, by early 1774, part of the present day northern Siam became *prathetsarat* to the Siamese crown. This came about through several events in

the eighteenth century. Below are some of the features of the relations between the tributary states of northern Siam and the sovereign ruler in Bangkok.

(i) Political and Economic Autonomy

Northern Siam consisted of several *muangs* (states) and each was ruled by a local prince who was also the *Chao muang* of the state. The *Chao Upparat* or the heir-apparent usually succeeded to the chieftainship upon the death of the *Chao muang*. Bangkok did not interfere in the appointment of a ruler in the northern states but its approval was sought.

The northern states regarded their status as *prathetsarat* to Bangkok with some pride and dignity because it was not a position of entire subordination. In fact, it was said that the tributary states and the outer provinces were "fiercely jealous of their political independence".[44] They were not quite willing to accept interference in their existing system of government. The *prathetsarat* states were accustomed to being ruled by their own hereditary princes.[45] They had laws and customs peculiar to their own states.[46] In the north, the laws of King Mangrai, who was the founder of Chiang Mai, prevailed.

Unlike the provinces, these states had their own distinctive system of revenue collection. There were no Bangkok appointed *chao phasi* (tax farmers) in the tributary states of the north until 1873. In contrast, taxes from some of the provinces were collected by Bangkok-appointed tax farmers even before the mid-nineteenth century. The revenue, derived from taxes collected in the north, was retained by the tributary states whose chiefs were expected to submit only tributary payment to the suzerain ruler

at regular intervals. These payments took the form of cash, gifts and forest products. They were also, at other times, expected to provide troops, labour for public works, and military as well as food supplies when demands were made from the capital. Some of the tributary states presented tribute annually, while others offered it once in two or three years. The hereditary chiefs of the northern states were *Chao Paendin* (owner of all the land, forest and mines) in their respective states. They had claims to the revenues derived from working the land, forests and mines. Any person who wished to extract timber from the forests or to work the mines in the northern states had first to obtain permission from the chief of that place.

The northern tributary states exercised political autonomy. In principle, this meant that they were free to administer their own states. Thus, when the missionaries of the American Board of Foreign Missions approached King Mongkut for permission to reside in Chiang Mai, the King advised them to seek the approval of the Prince of Chiang Mai.

The northern tributary states were, however, not allowed to deal with foreign countries or to initiate diplomatic ties with foreign powers on their own. Bangkok was most severe with its tributary states if it suspected the latter of disloyalty such as seeking protection or patronage from a foreign power. There were occasions when the northern rulers were called to appear in Bangkok when they were suspected of having sent gifts to neighbouring countries, in particular, Burma.

Bunnag has pointed out that "in the interests of national security", the government dealt harshly with some of the tributary states.[47] The invasion of Kedah, regarded as a Siamese vassal state, is a good example. In 1821, Kedah was invaded by

Siam when she was suspected of having sought Burmese protection. Similar situations occurred in the relations between the northern states of Siam and Bangkok. In 1863, the Prince of Chiang Mai was accused of conducting secret negotiations with the Burmese court at Ava. He was summoned to appear in Bangkok for questioning. Bangkok, suspecting that the northern states were about to change their allegiance from Siam to Burma, was worried about the threat to Siam's northern border should the northern states once again become tributary states of Burma. Bangkok remembered the vulnerable position of the northern Siamese frontier before 1774.[48] When confronted, the accused prince surrendered to the King of Siam the gifts he had received from Ava[49] and, by reiterating his acceptance of Bangkok as his sovereign, averted the crisis. The Prince was subsequently allowed to return to Chiang Mai.

(ii) The Bestowing of Titles

The succession to the throne in a northern *prathetsarat* was subject to Bangkok's approval. The succession was legitimate only when the Siamese King gave his official sanction. The despatch of the new chief's insignia from Bangkok signified the latter's acceptance of the new chief.

Following this, the new chief submitted to the central government a list of candidates to senior positions in his administration. In the case of northern Siam, these were the *Upparat*, *Ratchawong*, *Ratchabut*, and *Burirat*.[50] The importance of an appointment from Bangkok was clearly indicated by D. McGilvary, an American missionary who was stationed at Chiang Mai. In 1868, he wrote that:

> ... [the appointment of the *Chao Upparat*] has just come from Bangkok and will be important as it will be likely to secure the succession after the death of the present King.[51]

There were times when the King in Bangkok had to by-pass an obvious candidate to the chieftainship in order to avoid internal conflicts, particularly when the more influential princes such as the Prince of Chiang Mai or Lamphun opposed these particular candidates. Bangkok had to respect the wishes of the princes. In 1856, King Mongkut explained why it was politic to do so. He said:

> When appointing the *Upparat* and the *Ratchawong* for Chiangmai, which is a great tributary state with borders adjoining British Burma, we have to give way to the opinions of the Prince of Chiangmai and his cousins the princes of the neighbouring states, for that is the only way to ensure that there will be no internal division.[52]

(iii) Foreign Relations

In 1868, a missionary-run newspaper, The North Carolina Presbyterian reported that northern Siam,

> ... is not an independent country of its own with liberty to make treaties with foreign nations and receive ambassadors from them in return.[53]

But Tej Bunnag maintains that the Siamese government generally tolerated the tendency of the tributary states to conduct foreign relations on their own.[54] This was because the tributary states were situated at a great distance from Bangkok and it was difficult to monitor closely the developments in these states. This appears not to be the case with regard to the northern states of Siam in the nineteenth century.

Bunnag's comment is found in a chapter entitled "Siam in 1892". But most of the events cited as examples range from the 1810's to the 1880's. And, in the paragraph

that follows his remark, Bunnag says that "the tributary states were encouraged to conduct their own foreign policy when it suited the central government's interests". In other words, the central government would not allow the tributary states to conduct foreign relations on their own if the effects were detrimental to the interests of the Kingdom of Siam.

According to Bunnag again, when a tributary state conquered a neighbouring state and prevailed upon its ruler and people to acknowledge allegiance to the King of Siam, it was deemed to have conducted its foreign policy well because it suited Bangkok's interests. In other words, Siam was selective in exercising her tolerance in the matter. Although Bunnag does not specifically say so, it is clear from his examples that Siam did not allow her tributary states complete freedom to initiate diplomatic ties with any foreign nation. Hence, as stated earlier, the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai was made to appear in Bangkok in 1863 when suspected of having changed allegiance because he had received gifts from Ava.[55]

There were times when the chief of a northern state was approached by foreign trade representatives expecting to establish trade relations. The northern chief's response to foreign trade missions, such as the Richardson Mission in 1829, provides a clue as to how the states in northern Siam conducted their foreign relations. Richardson was a British government representative who was sent by the Commissioner of Tenasserim to Chiang Mai on a trade mission. He was to explore the possibilities of extending British trade into northern Siam. At a public audience with the northern Chief, Richardson presented ten muskets and other gifts. The Chief did not accept the gifts. Instead, he remarked that "the presents must be sent to the King of Siam whose

instructions would be taken".[56] When Richardson made a further request for the establishment of an "unrestrained" trading relation, the Chief replied that "they must wait for instructions from Siam".[57]

The states in northern Siam were economically attractive. Their natural resources and the trans-frontier trade involving Moulmein, Chiang Mai and Yunnan drew the attention of foreign powers in the nineteenth century. The British, having gained a foothold in Burma in 1826, and the French, having established a protectorate over Cambodia in 1867, began to pay attention to their teak-rich neighbour. The desire to reach a wider market in China from Burma and the attempts to construct a railway line connecting Burma and southern China were major considerations in the minds of the British in Burma in the nineteenth century. Between China and Burma were the "virgin" states of north Siam.

There were two reasons why, in the nineteenth century, Bangkok could not have granted the northern states complete freedom to deal with foreign countries. First, Siam feared foreign encroachment into the resource-rich area of the northern region. Second, the states of northern Siam were militarily weak and, therefore, vulnerable to foreign invasion.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the same reason that Bunnag cited for Bangkok's "loose" control over the northern states, thereby allowing autonomy in the conduct of foreign affairs, namely, distance and communication, became instead factors that hastened central control over the region.

The Chiang Mai Treaty of 1874, signed between the Siamese government in Bangkok and the British government in India, and the Chiang Mai Treaty of 1883,

signed between Siam and Britain, clearly affected the northern states, yet the northern ruling class were not consulted in the pre-treaty negotiations. To solve the problem of distance and communication, government departments were established in the north not long after. For example, the *Krom Pamai* or the Forest Department established under the Ministry of Interior was aimed at bringing under central control the forest affairs of the north.

While it can be ascertained, to some extent, Siam's policy on the matter of her northern tributary states and their freedom or lack of it to conduct relations with foreign countries, very little is known as to how the northern rulers viewed Siam's foreign policies. How, for example, did the northern states perceive Siam's relations with other countries? Did they consider themselves as part of the Siamese Kingdom when Siam signed the Treaty of Friendship with Britain? An incident between British Consul Schomburgk and a northern *Chao Upparat*, as reported by Schomburgk to the Siamese *Phrakhlang*, offers some insights.

In 1860, Robert Schomburgk met the *Chao Upparat* of Chiang Mai. Following the meeting, Schomburgk reported that the *Chao Upparat* had asserted his complete administrative and judicial independence as ruler of Chiang Mai. According to Schomburgk:

> Chao Operat [*Upparat*] declared to me while at Chiang Mai that their Majesties the Kings of Siam merely concluded that treaty for Bangkok, and that it did not refer to the Lao States, speaking as if they were independent of Siam.[58]

The declaration from the *Chao Upparat* prompted Schomburgk to question the status of the northern tributaries in relation to Siam's foreign policy. Schomburgk asked,

> ... whether the Treaty [Bowring]... refers equally to the Lao States tributaries to their Majesties the Kings of Siam as to their dominions, or whether those petty states and those who govern them, are independent of Kings of Siam, so that any public act referring to Foreign or Home Affairs and Siam has no reference to them.[59]

But to Siam, the northern states were not excluded from the provisions of the Treaty. If they were, the implication would be that foreign powers could conduct negotiations with the northern states of Siam without consulting Bangkok.

Politics, Economy and Commerce of the Northern States in the 19th. Century

(i) Politics

Within the political structure of the northern states there were three classes. At the top of the hierarchy were the *chao kan ha bai* or "five lords with regalia". The *chao kan* consisted of five persons. The *chao luang* or the supreme ruler was the chief of the *chao kan*. The remaining four officers of the *chao kan* were, in descending order, the *chao ho na*, the *chao ratchawong*, the *chao ratchabut* and the *chao burirat* (*chao ho muang kaeo*).

The *chao luang* was the most influential and a highly respected member of the *muang* administration. A *chao luang* was backed by the Siamese court. He had a commanding position which was derived from his personal influence and wealth. Each of the five major *muangs* in the northern states had a *chao luang*.[60] Other minor *muang* or towns had a *chao muang*. A *chao luang* was said to enjoy almost absolute power. Hence the title *chao chiwit*, meaning "lord of life", was used in reference to the *chao luang*. He had the power to nominate other members of the *chao kan* and officers to the

other levels of the hierarchy. The King in Bangkok acted upon the recommendations of the *chao luang* in the appointment of candidates to the important offices of the *muang* administration.

The *chao luang* of Chiang Mai was considered the most powerful among the five *chao luang*. He was responsible for overseeing the affairs of the minor states. Bangkok consulted the *chao luang* of Chiang Mai on the appointments of the *chao muangs* of the smaller states. The *chao luang* of Chiang Mai was also consulted when appointments of the *chao kan* of the major states were made.

The *chao ho na* of a *muang* served as the acting chief when the chief was absent on either official or unofficial occasions. For instance, when a chief was in Bangkok on a tribute-bearing mission or had taken ill, the *chao ho na* became the acting chief. The *chao ho na* handled the affairs of the *muang* especially those involving finance and foreign relations. Foreigners visiting the northern states called on the *chao ho na* first before meeting the *chao luang*. The *chao ho na* was the second most important person in the administration of the *muang*.

The normal procedure to decide upon a successor after the death of the *chao muang* was for the influential members of the ruling family to choose from among the four members of the *chao kan*. The *chao ho na* was almost always the successor. The remaining three members of the *chao kan* advanced one rank and a new candidate filled the lowest position, the *chao burirat*. But the procedure was not always followed. Influential members of the ruling class could elevate a member directly from a lower to a higher position without observing the rotation principle.[61]

Below the *chao kan* was the second most important institution, the *khao sanam luang* or the State Council. It comprised thirty two men, a majority of them were from the ranks of lesser *chao*. Financial and other important policies pertaining to the administration of the *muang* were deliberated upon by members of the *sanam*. But the decisions of the *sanam* were not always binding or acted upon. Influential personalities, often members of the *chao kan*, could overrule the proceedings and decisions of the *sanam*.There were instances when the *sanam* was not consulted and important judgements were made without referring to it.

The third and lowest level in the administrative hierarchy was the village. A village was led by the village head or the *puyai baan*. Leaders at the village level made available manpower for corvee and military services when requested by the ruling group. The collection of *suai* or tribute for the ruling group was also the responsibility of the village leaders. The village heads retained part of the village revenue for their services. Most of the local officials and members of the ruling class were related to one another either by kinship or marriage ties. The chiefs were the patrons and the commoners or the *phrai*, their clients.

Similar to the monarch in the capital city who was a *dharmaraja*, the chiefs in the northern states elevated themselves to "divine status" and claimed legitimacy by performing spirit-related rituals. In fact, historical accounts of the northern states based on the *tamnan* (stories related to Buddhism) and *phongsawadan* (dynastic chronicle)[62] indicate that cities and *muangs* were founded with divine aid and ruled by demi-gods.[63] The chief took on a religious function and acted as a mediator between the *phrai* and the spirits of the *muang* (state). The chief worshipped and conducted offerings to the

spirits for peace and prosperity in his *muang*. The *phrai*, on the other hand, paid homage to the chief who was responsible for ensuring the peasants' well-being.

(ii) Economy

Production of glutinous rice was the main agricultural activity in the north. Both wet and dry rice were cultivated. Wet rice was grown in the lowlands. The alluvial plains surrounding the valleys of the Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan were fertile and suitable for wet rice cultivation. Hills and mountains were predominantly used for dry rice cultivation.

Farmers in the north also practised shifting (swidden) rice farming. Both the lowlands and the mountain regions were used by swidden cultivators. The middle terraces, between the mountains and valleys, were covered with forests. This was the source of a large quantity of timber and forest products.

Apart from being the staple diet of the northerners, glutinous rice or *khao nio* was offered as tribute and tax to the ruling groups. Forest products or *kong pa* were another category of goods offered as tribute. Forest products from the north included *krang* (lacquer stick), *miang* (fermented tea), *kamyan* (benzoin), *nga chang* (ivory), *nang sat* (animal hide) and *ki pheng* (beeswax).[64]

Rain as a source of water for the rice fields has always been unreliable. In fact, between October and May every year, the northern region experiences a prolonged dry season. The annual rainfall in the Chiang Mai (Ping) valley, for instance, is 1218 mm, of which 95 per cent is received from May to September.[65] As such, irrigation projects have long been essential in the north. In modern times an efficient system of irrigation[66]

makes possible, in some areas, the production of two rice crops a year.

The construction and maintenance of dams (*fai*) were a matter of collective responsibility. Hence the dams were communally owned. Officers were elected to oversee and maintain the dams. These persons were called the *hua na muang fai*.

Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda, a Thai scholar, claims that the northern states of Thailand have, to date, the best system of irrigation in Siam. Northern Siam, by the nature of terrain characterized by mountains, forests and valleys and the character of its climate, left the northerners with little choice but to build dams and canals. An efficient system of irrigation was essential because, if the farmers in the lowlands failed to control effectively the amount of water that flowed down to the plains, the rice fields would be either flooded or left dry, depending on whether it was the rainy or dry season. Thus, the construction of dams and canals was important to the people of the north. They became very skilful in this activity.

The Irrigation Laws of King Mangrai, contained in the Laws of King Mangrai or the *Mangraisat*, indicate that emphasis had been placed on the construction and maintenance of an efficient system of irrigation from as early as the twelfth century. There were rules and regulations that the northern Thai society had to abide by. Wrongdoers were either punished by a levy of fines or directed to repair the damage that they had caused. For instance, if a steersman, while guiding his raft or boat damaged part of a dam, he would have to restore the dam to its original condition. But, if the steersman was unable to do so, he could, alternatively, pay a fine for damages depending on the size of the dam. Damages to a big dam would be a fine of 110 *ngoen* while a smaller dam amounted to 52 *ngoen*.[67]

Everyone of the *phrai* who hoped to benefit from the irrigation projects was expected to participate in the construction of the dams. Persons failing to contribute their share of labour in the construction of dams and canals would be penalized.[68] The *Mangraisat* reveals not only the importance of maintaining an efficient system of irrigation but also the just administration of King Mangrai. More important still, Mangrai's laws provide ample evidence of the importance of dams and canals in the economic lives of the northerners.

(iii) Trade and Commerce

In the nineteenth century, the northern states of Siam traded with four major areas. The first three were with Moulmein (in Burma), Kengtung (the largest of the Shan States) as well as Yunnan in southern China. This trade was conducted overland and it was popularly known as the trans-frontier trade.[69] The fourth segment of its trade was with Bangkok. There were, in effect, four trade routes to represent the four divisions of the northern trade.

First, the overland trade route from Yunnan in southern China brought the Ho caravan traders to Chiang Mai before they proceeded to trade in Moulmein. The second trade route connected the Shan States with Chiang Mai. The third was the route travelled by traders from Moulmein in Burma. The fourth, using in part an overland route and in part the river, connected Bangkok with Chiang Mai.

The **Ho caravan traders** brought silk, opium, tea, iron, copper, and copper utensils from Yunnan.[70] The caravans consisted of 50-100 mules and ponies. The trade trip of a Ho started from Tali in Yunnan. It passed through places like Chiang Rung,

Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai and then went on to Chiang Mai or Lampang.[71] Only after the 1840's did the Ho caravan traders proceed from Chiang Mai to Moulmein.[72] They travelled overland from Chiang Mai to Paan, on the Salween, and left their mules there. Then they went on to Moulmein on rafts. They disposed of the goods that they brought from Yunnan along the route before reaching Moulmein where they bought muslin, printed calico and cotton piece goods. They sold some of these items in Chiang Mai before leaving for home. As such, goods from Moulmein were available in Chiang Mai through the Ho caravan traders. These traders returned home with caravans laden with raw cotton, cotton piece goods and edible birds' nests from Moulmein and betel nut from Chiang Mai. Cotton was a very profitable resale item. Cotton prices in Yunnan were almost four times higher than the original price. The Ho caravaneers made regular trade trips between Southwestern China and the northern states.

The **Shan traders** traded between Kengtung and Chiang Mai. They came with pack oxens, bringing rice and opium from Kengtung. Like the Ho caravaneers, the Shans disposed of their goods along the route to Chiang Mai. Apart from rice and opium, they sold swords, tea, lacquer ware, earthenware, honey and cloth.[73] At times, the Shans sold ponies and mules in Chiang Mai and Burma. On the way back from a pony selling trip, the Shans brought piece goods from Moulmein which were subsequently sold in the northern states. They then bought betel nut in Chiang Mai and disposed them in the Shan States.

Burmese caravans from Moulmein carried British goods to the northern states. From Moulmein they passed by Papun, Mae Sariang and Hot before reaching Chiang Mai where the Burmese caravan traders purchased rice, cotton, betel, lacquer, tobacco,

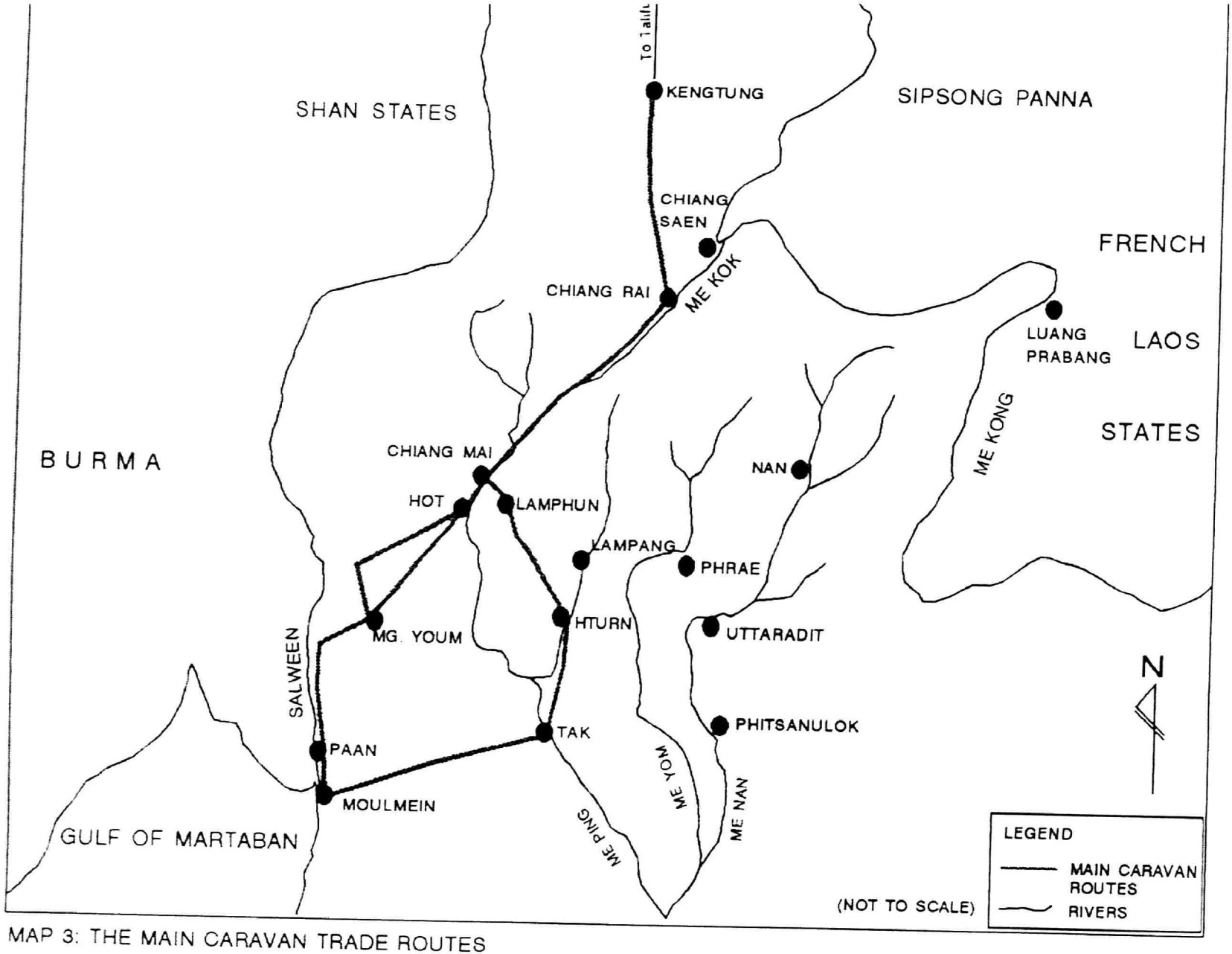
ponies and cattle. The princes of Chiang Mai controlled and earned large profits from the cattle trade.

There were also the **northern Thai caravan traders**. These traders mostly engaged in the rice trade. They brought rice from places where it was abundant to where it was scarce. Some traded in forest products. For example, traders from Phrae brought wax, hides and horns to Uttaradit. In Uttaradit, the northern Thai traders purchased salt, a prized item in the up-country trade.

Trade between Bangkok and Chiang Mai was done partly on land and partly by river.[74] Tak or its older name Raheng and Uttaradit were two main entrepots in the Bangkok-Chiang Mai trade. Tak was traditionally a border town between the northern region and the central plains. It was a trade centre for lacquer, dammar, hides and tobacco. Uttaradit, which was the northernmost point navigable on the Menam Chao Phraya, was an important centre for obtaining salt.

Some of the towns along the trading routes were commercially more important than the others. Chiang Rai on the Me Kok, a tributary of the Mekong, was situated on the caravan routes from Yunnan, the Shan States and the northern states of Chiang Mai and Lampang. It was an important station before the caravaneers proceeded either to Tak or Uttaradit or Moulmein.[75]

Chiang Mai was the most important trade town in the north.[76] It was on the Me Ping and became an important entrepot. Goods carried by the Ho (Yunnan), Ngiow (Shan States) and the Khun (Kengtung) were unloaded and subsequently distributed at Chiang Mai.



MAP 3: THE MAIN CARAVAN TRADE ROUTES

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Chiang Mai had an important trade with Moulmein and this was larger than its trade with Bangkok. A large proportion of the trade between Chiang Mai and Moulmein comprised cattle, mules and ponies. The trade in cattle, in particular, was an important aspect of the trade between Chiang Mai and Moulmein. The importance of the cattle trade can be traced from as early as the 1820's.

In the late 1820's, Major A.D. Maingy, Commissioner of Tenasserim, chose David Lester Richardson to undertake a mission to the chiefs of Lampang and Chiang Mai.[77] The mission hoped to establish trade relations with states across the Salween. Members of the mission sought the supply of two important items for the British in Burma: cattle and timber. Beef was required to feed the troops (British) in Burma. Cattle in Burma was scarce and its price, high. Timber was essential for the construction of barracks and houses in Moulmein. The teak forests and other timber which grew across the Salween on the Siamese side were to supplement the supply of wood needed in Burma. Commissioner Maingy had instructed Richardson to persuade the caravan traders who brought goods from Yunnan to Chiang Mai to extend their journey to Moulmein.[78]

D.L. Richardson was a medical doctor who served in various places in Burma during the 1820's and 1830's. He had served in Rangoon, Danubye, Pegu and Shwegyin before the Anglo-Burmese War of 1826. After 1826, he worked in Amherst and Moulmein. He was fluent in Burmese and spoke Shan as well.

Richardson's first trip to Siam was made on 11 December, 1829. He travelled with a group of traders by boat up the Salween river. The trip in 1829 resulted in the establishment of friendly relations with Siamese officials. Following Richardson's return to Burma after the trip, Commissioner Maingy wrote that native traders managed to enter Laboun (Lamphun) and Zemmai (Chiang Mai) to purchase cattle and transport them over to Moulmein without any restrictions.[79]

It was at the time when supplies of fine cattle began to arrive in Burma from Chiang Mai and Lamphun, and the annual trade between these states began to increase, that problems arose to threaten the established friendly trade relations. Attacks by the Red Karens living along the cattle trade route was one of the complaints forwarded by the Burmese traders. The Karens were reported to have attacked and enslaved passing traders and Shan villagers. The slaves were then bartered with the Siamese for cattle. Between two to seven bullocks were obtained in exchange for a slave and the exchange was "according to the age and beauty of the women and strength of the men".[80]

The other problem was the falling sales in cattle. The Chiang Mai traders were unhappy over the poor prices for cattle offered to them in Moulmein by the traders who were responsible for supplying beef to the troops. As such, the Chiang Mai traders were less inclined to sell their cattle. Richardson was also assigned to ensure that at least "700 heads would be purchased annually at the following rates, viz. 15 rupees for the best, 12 for the middling and 10 for the inferior kind".[81] Before instructing Richardson to start on another mission to Siam, the Commissioner of the Tenasserim provinces, E.A. Blundell, wrote to the British government to explain his decision on the appointment of Richardson to lead the mission. He said:

> Much praise is due to Dr. Richardson for having by his mild and conciliatory demeanour, his intimate knowledge of the Burmese language and acquaintance with the habits and customs of the natives of these countries, succeeded in obtaining that influence among the Northern Siamese Chiefs that promises us an uninterrupted supply of these valuable animals.[82]

But the reason that really hastened Richardson's second visit to Siam was the report made by Blundell that the people of Moulmein (British nationalities included) were running the risk of trouble by extracting timber from the Siamese territory north of Thaungyi. One of them was William Warwick who had set up a shipbuilding yard of his own at Natmaw, in Bilugyun, Burma.[83]

Armed with presents amounting to not more than 600 rupees and an additional gift of 50 muskets to the chiefs of the northern states, Richardson left on his second mission to Siam. Perhaps Blundell was hoping to please the chiefs with gifts so that the problem of British subjects extracting timber from Siamese territory would not be brought up immediately. It is possible that it was a ploy to buy time while the British officers in Burma tried to find a solution to the problem caused by their subjects logging illegally in Siam.

Blundell reported that the British government had made immense savings by obtaining cattle from Chiang Mai to feed the European troops stationed along the coast, in lieu of procuring them from either Bengal or Madras.[84] In 1838, another mission was despatched from British Burma to Siam. The mission, again led by Richardson, and deputed by Commissioner Blundell, was to persuade the King of Siam to encourage trade between that country and Tenasserim.[85]

Overview

The politics, economy and commerce of the five northern tributary states at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as described in this chapter, changed rapidly in the following decades of that century. Firstly, the northern states witnessed a gradual breakdown in local lines of authority. At the start of the twentieth century, all the five chiefs of the tributary states had lost their political and economic power.

Secondly, the economic structure changed when teak became the most valuable commodity in the north and it began to receive a great deal of attention from European powers. The scramble for teak leases in the north led to Bangkok assuming a bigger and more direct role in the allocation of forest leases. Furthermore, the northern chiefs who were the *Chao Paendin* were replaced by the central government which, by the turn of the twentieth century, had transferred the authority over the land, mines and forests in the north to the monarch in Bangkok. Thus the *Chaos* lost their economic power. By1910, the most influential of the northern chiefs, the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai, became a salaried government official.

Thirdly, there was an increasing economic link between Chiang Mai and Bangkok from about the last two decades of the nineteenth century. This trade link came to replace the traditionally popular overland trade between Chiang Mai and Moulmein, and with it the cattle trade between these two places declined as well.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, these changes in the politics and commerce of northern Siam occurred with the coming of the missionaries and the teak traders whose activities in northern Siam will be examined in the next four chapters.

[1] The spelling of the names of these states is by no means consistent. Chiang Mai is also spelt Chiangmai or Cheangmai. The older name of Lakawn may be used for Lampang. Lamphun is sometimes spelt Lampoon or Lapoon and Phrae at times is spelt Prae or Praa. Different opinions are given as regards to the number of the northern states. At times, Luang Prabang is included and at other times Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son are omitted.

[2] Reginald le May, An Asian Arcady: The Land and Peoples of Northern Siam, Bangkok: White Lotus, 1926, p. 4.

[3] Nigel J. Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam", in JSEAS, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1973, p. 302.

[4] Ratanaporn Sethakul, `Political, Social And Economic Changes In The Northern States Of Thailand Resulting From The Chiang Mai Treaties of 1874 and 1883', Ph.D. thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1989, p. 12.

[5] Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, New York: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1912, p. 56.

[6] Anan Ganjanapan, `Early Lanna Thai Historiography: An Analysis Of The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Chronicles', M.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1976, p. 95 (Appendix 1).
Burmese sources give the date of Bayinnaung's attack as C.S. 920 which is equivalent to 1558 A.D. See "Relationship with Burma, Part 1" in Selected Articles From Journal of Siam Society, Vol. 5, 1959, p. 22.

[7] N.A. Jayawickrama (trans.), The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror: Being a Translation of the Jinakalamalipakaranam, London: Luzac & Company, 1968, p. 111.
Mangrai's name is given as Mamraya in the text. See Footnote (7) on the same page.

[8] D.K. Wyatt, Thailand: A Short History, London: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 47.

[9] Ibid., p. 49.

[10] D.J. Steinberg (ed.), In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987, p. 111.

[11] Reginald le May, An Asian Arcady,p. 5-6.

[12] S.H. Poole (Lieut), "Travels in the Kingdom of Cheangmai", in Bangkok Calendar, 1869, pp. 107-108.

[13] M.L. Manich, History of Laos (including the history of Lannathai, Chiengmai), Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1967, p. 51.

[14] The walls surrounding the towns had a sacred meaning. For a discussion on this see Gehan Wijeyewardene, "Great City on the River Ping: Some Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on Chiang Mai", in Political Science Review, Chiang Mai University, Vol. 6, 1985, pp. 86-112.

[15] N.A. Jayawickrama (trans.), The Sheaf of Garlands p. 96.

[16] Ibid., p. 97.

[17] Ibid., p. 112. The figure somehow appears a little exaggerated.

[18] Anan Ganjanapan, `Early Lan Na Thai Historiography', p. 33.

[19] For a discussion of the *Jinakalamalipakaranam* and the *Mulasasana*, see Anan Ganjanapan, `Early Lan Na Thai Historiography'.

[20] Prasoet Churatana (trans.), D.K. Wyatt (ed.), The Nan Chronicle, Data Paper 59, Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1966, pp. 14 - 16.

[21] Camille Notton, Annales du Siam, Chronique de Chiang Mai, Vol. 3, Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1932, p. 110. See Footnote (3) on the same page.

[22] Prasoet Churatana (trans.), The Nan Chronicle, p. 42.

[23] M.L. Manich, History of Laos, p. 72.

[24] For details on the resettlement campaign see Volker Grabowsky, "Forced Resettlement Campaigns In Northern Thailand During The Early Bangkok Period ", Paper presented at the Thai Studies Conference, SOAS, London, 1993.

[25] Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda, "Put vegetables in baskets and men in towns", in Lucien M. Hanks, Lauriston Sharp et. al., Ethnographic Notes on Northern Thailand, Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asian Studies Department, Cornell University, 1965, p. 8.

[26] W.S. Bristowe, Louis and the King of Siam, London: Chatto and Windus, 1976, p. 55.

[27] R.H. Schomburgk, "A Visit to Cheangmai, The Principal City of the Laos or Shan States", Bangkok Calendar, 1870, p. 67.
Schomburgk's account is also available in the Siam Repository, Vol. 1, No. 3, July, 1869, pp. 173-182.

[28] Michael R.J. Vatikiotis,`Ethnic Pluralism in the Northern Thai City of Chiang Mai',

Ph.D. thesis, St. Catherine's College, Oxford, 1984, p. 53.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Gehan Wijeyewardene, "Thailand and the Tai: Versions of Ethnic Identity" in Gehan Wijeyewardene (ed.), Ethnic Groups across National Boundaries in Mainland Southeast Asia, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990, p. 48.

[1] Walter F. Vella, Siam Under Rama III, 1824-1851, New York: J.J. Augustin ncorporated, 1957, p. 78.

[2] Frank M. Lebar et. al., Ethnic Groups Of Mainland Southeast Asia, New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press,1964, p. 188.

[3] Nigel J. Brailey, `The Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement in Western Laos, 850-92', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1968, p. ix.

[4] Lucien M. Hanks, "The Yuan or Northern Thai", in John McKinnon and Wanat Bhruksasri (eds.), Highlanders of Thailand, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 983, p. 101.

[5] Suthep Soonthornpasuch, `Islamic Identity in Chiengmai City: A Historical and tructural Comparison of Two Communities', Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1977, p. 24.

[6] Lucien M. Hanks and Jane R. Hanks, " Southern Groups: Siamese Thai ", in Frank 1. Lebar et. al., Ethnic Groups Of Mainland Southeast Asia, p. 197.

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[43] Ratanaporn Sethakul,`Political, Social and Economic Changes In The Northern States Of Thailand', p. 13.

[44] Tej Bunnag, The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915: The Ministry of the Interior under Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 31.

[45] Bangkok Calendar, 1868, p. 76.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Tej Bunnag, The Provincial Administration of Siam, p. 31.

[48] Ibid., p. 36.

[49] These gifts included two rings of rubies, fifteen chains of "sangvan gold", a plaque of gold encrusted with four big rubies and ninety six little ones and some fabric. But, the King of Siam only took one ring of rubies and allowed Kawilorot to keep the rest of the presents. See Camille Notton, Annales du Siam, Vol. 3, p. 263.

[50] Tej Bunnag, The Provincial Administration of Siam, p. 33.

[51] BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 3 March, 1868, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.

[52] Tej Bunnag, The Provincial Administration of Siam, p. 33.

[53] NCP, 5 February, 1868, p. 4.

[54] Tej Bunnag, The Provincial Administration Of Siam, p. 35.

[55] Ibid., p. 36.

[56] E.A. Blundell, "An account of some of the Petty States Lying North of the Tenasserim Provinces; drawn up from the Journals and Reports of D. Richardson, Esq., Surgeon to the Commissioner of the Tenasserim Provinces ", in JASB, Vol. 5, October 1836, p. 616.

[57] Ibid.

[58] NA, R.4. 2/3 , Robert Schomburgk to Chao Phya Phraklang, Bangkok, 15 June, 1860, in Correspondence between British Consular and the Siamese Government.

[59] Ibid.

[60] However, the term *chao muang* is commonly used to refer to the *chao luang* in most European and some Thai sources.

[61] A similar system of tiered ranks prevailed in the Malay state of Perak.

[62] The *tamnan* and the *phongsawadan* are two types of Thai historical writings. For details see Charnvit Kasetsiri, "Thai Historiography from Ancient Times to the Modern Period" in, Anthony Reid and David Marr (eds.), Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia, Singapore: Heinemann Education Books, 1979.

[63] Lucien M. Hanks, "The Yuan or Northern Thai", p. 102.

[64] Chatthip Nartsupha, Sethakit Muban Thai Nai Aditr [The Economy of Siam in the Past], Bangkok: Borisat Samnakpiem Sangoen Jamkad, 1990 (reprint), p. 53.

[65] Paul T. Cohen, "Irrigation and the Northern Thai State in the Nineteenth Century", in Gehan Wijeyewardene and E.C. Chapman (eds.), Patterns and Illusions: Thai History and Thought, Canberra: The Richard Davies Fund and the Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1992, p. 57.

[66] See for instance British Consul, Schomburgk's observation in 1859/60 on the canal system in the north in R.H. Schomburgk, "A Visit to Cheangmai, The Principal City of the Laos or Shan States", in Bangkok Calendar, 1870, p. 66.

[67] Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda, "The Irrigation Laws of King Mangrai", in Lucien M. Hanks, Lauriston Sharp et. al., Ethnographic Notes on Northern Thailand, p. 3.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ratanaporn Sethakul, `Political, Social and Economic Changes in the Northern States', pp. 59-60.

[70] Andrew D.W. Forbes, "The "Cin-Ho" (Yunnanese Chinese) Caravan Trade With North Thailand During The Late Nineteenth And Early Twentieth Centuries", in JAH, Vol. 21, 1987, p. 22.

[71] Ratanaporn Sethakul, `Political, Economic and Social Changes in the Northern States', p. 63.

[72] Ibid., p. 64.

[73] See BCR (Chiang Mai), 1891, p. 7.
See also, BCR (Chiang Mai), 1904, p. 7 [under sub-section: Lakon Lampang and Chiengrai].

[74] See Chapter Six for a more detailed account of the Bangkok-Chiang Mai trade.

[75] Ratanaporn Sethakul, `Political, Social and Economic Changes in the Northern States', p. 60.

[76] BCR (Chiang Mai), 1898, p. 7.

[77] R.R. Langham-Carter, "David Lester Richardson - Diplomat and Explorer", in JBRS, Vol. 49, Pt. 2, 1966, pp. 209.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., p. 210.

[80] Ibid., p. 213.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., p. 214.

[83] Ibid.

[84] E.A. Blundell, "An account of some of the Petty States Lying North of the Tenasserim Provinces", p. 603.

[85] R.R. Langham-Carter, "David Lester Richardson - Diplomat and Explorer", p. 217.