

CHAPTER THREE

THE LAOS MISSION: EARLY ACTIVITIES

Christian Missionaries in Siam in the Nineteenth Century

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, foreign powers, Britain in particular, attempted to establish trade links with Siam. The Crawford Mission of 1822 and the Burney Mission of 1826 demonstrated the eagerness of the British, through the East India Company, to establish trade relations with Siam. On the other hand, Siam was hoping to acquire guns and ammunition from the British in exchange for her goods in the Anglo-Siam foreign trade. The missions paved the way for British traders to trade in Siam.

The opening of trade links between Siam and Britain, particularly through the Burney Treaty of 1826, had other advantages too. It paved the way for the arrival of Protestant missionaries.¹ The year 1828 saw the arrival of two of the first Protestant missionaries to Siam.² In August 1828, Rev. Charles Gutzlaff and Jacob Tomlin arrived in Bangkok. Charles Gutzlaff, previously of the Netherlands Missionary Society, had severed his ties with the society and came to Siam under the sponsorship of the London Missionary Society (LMS).³ Jacob Tomlin, an Englishman, was also a representative of the LMS.⁴

In Siam, Gutzlaff and Tomlin concentrated their efforts on evangelising among the Chinese in Bangkok. Both these Protestant missionaries adopted an aggressive style of evangelisation and this did not help the growth of the LMS in Siam. Within two months after their arrival in Siam, the entire stock of bibles in Chinese that Gutzlaff and

Tomlin brought had been distributed among the Chinese population in Bangkok.⁵ The Siamese government did not take too kindly to this kind of evangelisation. The *Phra Khlang* (Siamese Foreign Minister) requested Robert Hunter, a much trusted British merchant among the Siamese court circle in the 1830's,⁶ to take the Protestants out of the country. The two LMS representatives appealed to the *Phra Khlang* and requested that the reasons for which they were being expelled should be given in writing. The Siamese government admonished them and asked them "to be more sparing in the distribution of their books"⁷ but allowed them to remain in Siam.

In 1829, Messrs. Gutzlaff and Tomlin wrote to the churches in America, appealing for more missionaries to join them.⁸ Gutzlaff also wrote to the Baptist missionaries in Burma, urging them to send someone to take up mission work in Siam.⁹ But, not long after, the LMS representatives left Siam. Jacob Tomlin left the field owing to ill health in 1831, followed by Gutzlaff in 1832.

The American Protestant missionaries responded to the call from Messrs. Gutzlaff and Tomlin. In 1831, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) opened a mission station in Siam.¹⁰

In response to the appeal made to the Baptist missionaries in Burma, the Rev. John Taylor Jones and Mrs. Jones were transferred to Siam. The Baptist Mission's work in Siam thus began with their arrival in March 1833.¹¹ In Siam, the Baptists concentrated their work among the Chinese of the Teochiu speech group.

The most eminent of the missionaries of the ABCFM in Siam was the Rev. Dan Beach Bradley¹³ who was a Presbyterian and a trained medical missionary. He left for Siam from Boston on the *Cashmere* in 1834 and, after a long delay in Singapore,

arrived in Bangkok on 18 July 1835.¹⁴ In Singapore, Bradley purchased the first Siamese printing press which had been brought to Singapore from Serampore, India.¹⁵

Then came the Rev. Jesse Caswell who arrived in Siam in 1840. In 1845, Prince Mongkut, who was then in the priesthood, invited Caswell to teach him English and Science. In exchange for the language classes offered to Mongkut, Caswell was given a room in which he could preach and distribute tracts.¹⁶ A friendly relation blossomed between Caswell and Mongkut. Mongkut's appreciation of the services of his teacher and the knowledge gained from him was well demonstrated when, in September 1848, he attended the funeral of his teacher. Mongkut also presented Caswell's widow with a gift of white silk. Later, he erected a monument over Caswell's grave.¹⁷

Meanwhile, Bradley's medical work among the Siamese gained prominence and support from the King, the noblemen, and the people in general. In 1847, Bradley left for America and thereafter severed his ties with the ABCFM. In 1850, Bradley returned to Siam and worked under the auspices of the American Missionary Association (AMA) until his death in June, 1873. D.B. Bradley's medical qualifications facilitated the operation of a Protestant mission in Bangkok. Through his medical services and mostly through the profits from the printing press, Bradley became a self-supporting missionary in Bangkok,¹⁸ thus relieving the AMA of the need to support financially its mission in Siam.

It was also through the initiative of the industrious Bradley that the first two missionary run newspapers were founded in Siam. The Bangkok Calendar, an annual journal (1848-1873) and the Bangkok Recorder, a bi-monthly journal (1865-1866),

were both printed in Bangkok. Missionaries in Siam contributed articles and reports to both the papers. Their writings included accounts of their lives in Siam and the politics and administration of Siam. They also publicised their observations of Siamese lifestyle. Bradley himself was a prolific writer. His detailed and voluminous diary of his life in Siam is an invaluable source material for the writing of Thai history. Bradley laboured on in Siam until his death in 1873.

The American Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, United States (BOFM) was another group which sent missionaries to Siam in the nineteenth century. Among the first to arrive under the auspices of the BOFM were the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon and Dr. Samuel R. House. These three missionaries arrived in March 1847. The Siam Mission of the BOFM remained small until it received reinforcements in June 1858. Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson were the additions.

Daniel McGilvary was born into a staunch Scottish Presbyterian family in Moore Country, North Carolina, in 1828.¹⁹ McGilvary had a strict Presbyterian up-bringing. His father had served as a ruling elder in the church that the McGilvays attended, namely, the Buffalo Presbyterian Church in Sanford.²⁰ He received his high school education at the famous Bingham School at Oakes, North Carolina. Its principal, William J. Bingham, played an important role in McGilvary's mastering of Latin and Greek. Upon graduating from Bingham in May, 1849,²¹ McGilvary became a teacher. He taught for five years before "he felt called to the ministry".²² In 1853, McGilvary entered the Princeton Theological Seminary in the United States. It was at Princeton that he became acquainted with Jonathan Wilson who was later to become his colleague in Siam. Upon graduation, McGilvary served a year as a pastor in his native state, North

Carolina, and subsequently applied to join the Siam Mission. He sailed on the *David Brown* which was bound for Singapore on 11 March, 1858,²³ and arrived in Siam three months later.

Jonathan Wilson was born in western Pennsylvania in 1830.²⁴ He entered Princeton Seminary in the same year as McGilvary. But it was only in their final year at Princeton that the two became friends. That year, Dr. Samuel R. House of the Siam Mission visited Princeton. When addressing the seminary students, House spoke of the Presbyterian Mission in Siam and encouraged Princeton seminarians to join the Siam Mission. Upon graduation, Wilson spent a year as a missionary to the Choctaw Indians of Oklahoma and taught at a mission school called the Spencer Academy.²⁵ Following the one-year stint in Oklahoma, Wilson joined McGilvary on board the *David Brown* enroute to Siam.

The ABCFM and the AMA stationed themselves in the capital city. Their initial outreach comprised mostly the people living in the capital and its suburbs. These included work among the *khon tai* (southerners) of the central region and the Chinese community living in Bangkok and the surrounding areas. It was typical of most Protestant missions of the nineteenth century to concentrate their evangelising activities on the Chinese. Some of the missionaries had spent years studying the Chinese language prior to their coming to an Asian country. Gutzlaff of the LMS is one such example. He considered his work in Siam as transitory and aimed principally to bring the gospel to China.²⁶

Southeast Asian countries like Siam and even Malacca²⁷ were in actual fact considered a stepping stone to China by most of the early nineteenth century Protestant

missions. This phenomenon, which has been referred to as "waiting for China", indicates that most of the early mission stations in Southeast Asia, particularly those located at the Chinese settlements in these countries, served as a preparatory launching site for the Protestant mission to China. In Siam, they worked among the Thais and the Chinese and, in the meantime, waited in anticipation of an opportunity to enter the "walled empire". This was particularly true of the Baptist Mission in Siam.²⁸ It was only after China's defeat by Britain, in the Opium War in 1842, that the doors were officially opened to missionaries. Thereafter, mission work in Siam ceased to be a stepping stone to China. Most of the mission groups in Siam in the 1840's concentrated on their work locally and aimed for a wider outreach among the local population.

It is of significance here to note that as in Burma, mission activity in Siam during the early years of the Presbyterian Siam Mission (1830 to 1840's) was restricted by the court. During this period, Rama III, the King of Siam, suspected that the American missionaries were foreign political agents and he curtailed their work accordingly. From the start, Rama III's reign (1824-1851) was marked by internal feuds, uprisings, suspicions and anxieties. Firstly, he had not ascended the throne through the traditionally-adhered system of status by birth. His half-brothers were of higher princely rank; the eldest among them (Mongkut) was thought to be the rightful heir. Secondly, he had inherited from his father the problems that came after the invasion of the rebellious Malay dependency to the south (Kedah) in 1821. Kedah's location, adjacent to the British settlement of Penang, alerted Rama III to the threat of British intervention in Siamese territories should Kedah's political problems affect Britain's commercial interests in Penang. To the northeast, Rama III was engaged in a

war with Chao Anu, the Chief of Vientiane, a Lao tributary of Siam (1826-27). From the west, the looming threat of Burmese attacks persisted. Lastly, Siam's fear of the British was probably never stronger than with the British occupation of the Burmese territories of Arakan and Tenasserim in 1826.

The court was suspicious of all foreigners, missionaries included. Not surprisingly, the Protestant mission stations in Siam in the early nineteenth century were located mostly in the capital city and their activities came under the scrutiny of the court. Likewise, in Burma, the court in the centre was highly suspicious of the missionaries and feared the implication of allowing them to teach religion and carry out social work among the local people. The Protestant (particularly Anglican and Methodist) missionaries in Burma, in addition, arrived at an inopportune time; it co-incided with the British expansion into Burma. As such, it created Burmese suspicion of the Christian missionaries as agents and allies of the British. Following the annexation of Burmese territories by Britain, mission activity in Burma, indeed, began to receive support from the colonial rulers.³⁰

Siam's policy changed when Mongkut ascended the throne in 1851. During his reign, the Siamese court in Bangkok adopted a policy of tolerance towards the missionaries.

Mongkut's outlook was different from that of his predecessor. Firstly, he was a devout Buddhist and one who had served as a monk in the Buddhist monastery. Secondly, he was the founder of the *Thammayut* order in Thai Buddhism. While in the monastery, Mongkut became disillusioned with the mechanical repetition of most of the Buddhist texts and practices with no understanding of their inner meaning and purpose.

One of the reforms he introduced was the presentation of sermons in Siamese in place of the traditional custom of merely reciting texts in Pali.³¹ Through this order and his role in it, Mongkut contributed greatly to enhancing the status of Thai Buddhism. Thirdly, like the Kings before him, Mongkut embodied the powerful link between the monarchy and Thai Buddhism. Yet, Mongkut was tolerant of the missionaries and actually found their activities and services useful to Siam. For example, he found the missionaries competent as English language teachers. His own knowledge of English was mostly obtained through the teaching of the missionaries. Later, Mongkut employed some of the wives of the missionaries to teach English to the ladies in the palace. He also used the services of the missionaries to teach English and other secular subjects to the children of the royal household.

Some of the missionaries who were able to speak Siamese, later, served as American diplomatic representatives and interpreters to the government of Siam. Rev. Stephen Mattoon of the Presbyterian Mission was appointed the first United States Consul in Siam. He served as a Resident Consul between 1856 and 1859 and, at the same time, worked for the Presbyterian Mission. J.H. Chandler, a missionary with the Baptist Mission, is another example of a missionary turned diplomat. He was Resident US Consul for three years (1859-1862).³² Both Mattoon and Chandler had served as advisors to the governments of Siam and the United States during the US-Siam treaty negotiations in 1856.³³ Another member of the Presbyterian Mission in Siam, N.A. McDonald, served as Acting US Consul from 1868-1869, and again from 1881-1882 and, finally, 1885-1886.³⁴

Missionaries, serving in an official capacity with the government of Siam, had both regular and close contacts with important Siamese officials. These missionaries gradually won the trust of the King and officers of the highest rank in the administration of Siam. Through this trust, the Presbyterian mission in Siam was able to expand and reach out to the provincial and peripheral areas of Siam.

It was during the reign of King Mongkut that a Presbyterian mission was established by the BOFM of the Presbyterian Church, USA, in a region distant from the capital. Indeed, the first group of Europeans to become residents among the northern Thai in Chiang Mai were members of the BOFM.³⁵

In 1865, Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson journeyed from Bangkok to Chiang Mai. Two years later, in 1867, a Presbyterian mission station was established in Chiang Mai with the consent of Chao Kawilorot, the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai. The mission station was named the Laos Mission (also called the North Laos Mission or North Siam Mission).

The activities of the Laos Mission will be examined in two parts here: firstly, the mission's initial contact with the northern Thai and its ruling class and, secondly, the mission's social work in the field of medicine, education and printing. Their activities, especially in the field of education, helped in the socio-economic transformation of northern Siam in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, through their activities and, subsequently, the demands they made on Bangkok, matters of religious tolerance were addressed for the first time in northern Siam.

Mission Work In Northern Siam

Mission work in northern Siam can be divided into two categories: evangelistic and social. In the first category, missionaries embarked on tours to places far away from the mission station in Chiang Mai in order to reach out to a broad spectrum of the local people. During such trips, the missionaries distributed medicine and Christian literature in order to spread the "word of God". The trips and the subsequent reports written by the missionaries introduced these hitherto unknown places to the Westerners. They also informed interested traders, British particularly, of the trade routes. These reports served as an invaluable source of information on the northern Thai society in the nineteenth century.

European traders interested in the trade between Burma and China also benefited from the missionary reports written in the course of the tours undertaken to the northern countryside. The reports gave details of the most travelled trade routes, important trade stations and information on river routes as well as the customs and beliefs of the people living in those areas. When Holt Hallett, a British surveyor, toured the northern region for the proposed railway between Moulmein and Yunnan, McGilvary and Rev. J.N. Cushing of the American Baptist Mission accompanied him and acted as interpreters for the most part of the journey.³⁶ McGilvary and Cushing were well versed in the Lao and Shan languages respectively. Their knowledge of local languages in various ways helped the traders and surveyors whom they accompanied, for example, to obtain elephants for rental, to purchase foodstuffs along the journey, and, most important of all, to gather information on trade and travelling routes from the locals.

Mission activity in the field of social work, on the other hand, had a major impact on the small Christian community and the larger northern Thai society in that it introduced modern education, medical facilities and printing to the people. It can be argued that the introduction of such social work set in motion some important aspects of modernization which, in due course, came to be accepted by the central government in Bangkok.

The Early Years (1858-1869)

It was at a time when Bradley was actively pursuing mission work in Siam that Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson, on 20th. June 1858, arrived in Bangkok.³⁷ Daniel McGilvary did not stay long in Bangkok. Soon afterwards he joined fellow missionaries, Samuel McFarland and his wife, at a new mission station at Phetburi (Petchaburi). The Governor of Phetburi had extended an invitation to McGilvary to live in Phetburi and teach as much Christianity as he pleased if only "you will teach my son English".³⁸

In Phetburi, McGilvary began to work with a group of war captives from Korat, men whom he called Laos. These people were brought down to work on various public works for the government.³⁹ The captives were housed in camps at Phetburi. McGilvary and his missionary friends used this opportunity to spread the gospel among these men from the north. McGilvary built a bamboo school house and used it to preach to the workers. His work among this group of people was a useful introduction to what awaited him in the north. His evangelising work among the northerners in Phetburi, although of short duration, had far-reaching implications. Both McGilvary and his wife

(Sophia) were convinced that the northerners were most likely to receive the gospel. In a letter to her brother-in-law, Sophia McGilvary remarked that the northerners were "much interested, and some of them profess to believe in the Christian religion".⁴⁰ Thus, long after the departure of these workers, McGilvary pursued, tenaciously, the idea of establishing a mission among the northern Thai.

Encouraged by their work among the northern Thai, Daniel McGilvary and his colleague, Jonathan Wilson, embarked on a trip to the northern region on 20th. November 1863.⁴¹ They travelled by boat and on elephants, arriving at Chiang Mai on 7th. January 1864. At the time of their arrival, the *Chao luang* had left for Bangkok. McGilvary and Wilson were received by the high officials of Chiang Mai. Both the missionaries did not remain long in Chiang Mai as it was their first visit there and the trip was meant to be an exploratory survey of the northern region. Upon his return to Phetburi, McGilvary began harbouring hopes of establishing a mission in Chiang Mai or what was known to him then as the Lao country.

An opportunity to establish a mission in Chiang Mai offered itself when, in 1866, the ruling prince of Chiang Mai made his tri-annual tribute-paying trip to Bangkok. The missionaries, led by D.B. Bradley and fellow missionaries, D. McGilvary, N.A. McDonald and S.C. George, through the office of the American Consul, J.H. Hood, had, in the meanwhile, approached the Siamese King for permission to establish a mission in northern Siam.⁴² The Siamese King replied that the decision laid not with him but with the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai. The King suggested an audience with Chao Kawilorot, the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai (1856-1870).

At the meeting with the *Chao luang*, Bradley explained that the purpose of the mission was "to teach religion, establish schools and care for the sick".⁴³ Chao Kawilorot not only agreed but offered a plot of land and timber to build the mission house. The Prince also remarked that "he had always said that he was willing to grant the permission sought to reside there", a statement which the missionaries understood as an unconditional sanction to take residence in Chiang Mai.⁴⁴

Having completed the initial formal procedures, the Board of Foreign Missions was convinced that the idea of a new mission, away from the Siamese capital, was indeed the "call of God". In April 1867, the Laos Mission was established in Chiang Mai.

Funds to set up the mission were raised from the foreign community in Bangkok. The provision of land and timber by the *Chao luang* partially relieved the missionaries of the financial burden incurred in the setting up of the mission. Contributions in cash and kind were received by the missionaries. Dr. James Campbell, a doctor with the British Consulate in Bangkok, supplied the missionaries with medicine and a book of medical instructions. The Ladies Sewing Society, presumably a support group, led by Mrs. Campbell, contributed 600 ticals. A rifle was given by the German Consul in Bangkok for the protection of the missionaries.⁴⁵ Soon afterwards, on 3 January 1867, Daniel McGilvary and his family left for Chiang Mai and arrived 89 days later in the northern capital city.

It is not clear why the *Chao luang* was willing to allow the establishment of a mission in northern Siam. Perhaps, it was an opportune request by the missionaries, made at a time when the *Chao luang* was in Bangkok to pay tribute to the King of

Siam. The apparent friendship between the missionaries and the King might have put pressure on the *Chao luang* to agree to the request from the foreigners. But his initial kindness towards the missionaries changed to one of hostility not long after the mission was established.

The change in his treatment of the missionaries and the subsequent exchange of communication between the Chief and the Bangkok government, from whom the missionaries sought help, led to the introduction of significant changes to the existing form of government in the northern states of Siam. This, in turn, upset the traditional political equilibrium and led to instability in the northern states. The eventual restoration of stability had drastic consequences. Bangkok became increasingly dominant in the socio-economic and political affairs of the northern states.

Whereas in the 1860's, when the missionaries first arrived, the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai was the autonomous ruler or the leading actor in the politics and government of the northern states, in the 1900's, he became a dispensable stage-hand. Bangkok, on the other hand, assumed the key and dominant role.

Why was there a change in the *Chao luang's* attitude towards the missionaries? What took place in northern Siam as a result of the exchanges between the *Chao luang* and the missionaries? All these questions are relevant to the understanding of the subsequent transformation that took place in northern Siam. Also, how did Bangkok respond to the missionaries' plea for help and how did that affect the traditional Bangkok-Chiang Mai relations?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to look at the impact of the Laos Mission through the interaction among the missionaries, the ruling class and the

northern Thai. The interaction among these groups and the interplay of traditional and new elements led to change in the northern Thai society. It provided the occasion for Bangkok to extend its control into northern Siam and with that the eventual absorption of the northern states into Siam proper. But before dealing with this subject, it is necessary to take a closer look at the activities of the Laos Mission in Chiang Mai.

Struggle Against Traditional Beliefs

The first convert to Christianity in northern Siam was a certain Nan Inta. He was baptized in 1869, two years after the Laos Mission was established.⁴⁶

Nan Inta was a devout Buddhist and a respected abbot of a monastery. He accepted the teachings of the Christian doctrine when his long-held belief *vis-a-vis* the factors causing a solar eclipse was proven wrong by McGilvary. The locals believed that an eclipse was caused by the enraged spirit-god Rahu eating up the sun. Therefore, they were convinced that no one could predict the date and time of an eclipse. McGilvary set out to prove them wrong. On the day and time, as predicted by McGilvary, Nan Inta watched the eclipse using McGilvary's smoked-glass. This was a turning point in the life of Nan Inta and the Laos Mission. Nan Inta, finally convinced of the teaching of his Christian teacher, embraced the Christian faith. The Laos Mission, on the other hand, earned its first convert. Subsequently, Nan Inta went on to become the first native teacher and ruling elder.

The incident that led to Nan Inta's conversion is a typical example of one of the early situations confronting Christian missions in a non-Christian world, that of the struggle against traditional beliefs.⁴⁷ Widely practised spirit-worship was especially

evident among tribal communities living in the mountainous areas. These people made offerings to the spirits which they either worshipped or feared. Their act of offering alms was strictly conducted as a form of appeasing the spirits. This was to ensure that the spirits were not offended and would not bring misfortunes such as epidemics, droughts and famine. Thus Daniel McGilvary reported that:

The Lao as a race have been in bondage to the spirits... No event in life from birth to the last offices for the dead, could be undertaken without consulting or appeasing the presiding spirits of the class, the household or the country. Their anger is the fruitful cause of every disease and calamity....

The Buddhists, on the other hand, offer alms as a way of merit-making, hoping, in return, that their sins will be appropriately reduced. Through their merit-making activities, they hope for a better rebirth and eventually the attainment of *nirvana*.⁴⁹

The ethnic Karens, who lived along the frontier between Burma and Siam, were known to attribute the outbreak of an epidemic, cholera or smallpox, to the act of the spirits. The Karens and other people in the north were fearful of smallpox and when it afflicted their villages, they all fled to the mountains. Other similar spirit-related stories also claimed that when a village was afflicted by cholera or malaria, the persons practising witchcraft or *phi ka* in the village were the ones responsible. There had been incidents where, upon the Chief's order, the entire family suspected of practising witchcraft were chased away and their house and belongings burnt.

People condemned for practising witchcraft feared persecution. Many from this group of people sought refuge and were given protection by the church. An article in the North Carolina Presbyterian for the year 1886 narrated an incident which led a

family in Lamphun, accused of practising witchcraft, to convert to Christianity. The incident took place in 1885. It involved a wealthy man from a place called Baan Paan in Lamphun. He and his family were accused of witchcraft and, as a result, were forced to leave their village. Before leaving Baan Paan, the wealthy man was forced to tear down his house. This man later became acquainted with one of the elders from the mission and, soon after, he and his family embraced Christianity. The missionaries not only provided temporary relief to the accused but later sought and obtained permission from the Governor of Lamphun for the reconstruction of the person's family house. The house was rebuilt at the expense of the wealthy man and it was later used as a chapel.⁵⁰ Indeed, witchcrafters proved to be prospective converts and a substantial number became part of the church congregation.

Unlike the Buddhists, the highland tribal minorities had not developed a well organized and sophisticated belief system at the time the Presbyterians established their mission in Chiang Mai. As such, the Christian missionaries were keen to devote their attention to evangelising among this group of people. Perhaps, it was this factor that initially encouraged the BOFM to establish a mission station away from the centre, that is, in a remote peripheral area. Even in Burma, the Protestant missionaries accomplished greater success among the tribal people living in the highlands and interiors of the country, these being places where Buddhism had not penetrated.⁵¹

The provision of medical services by the missionaries, clearly, was a most effective method for the introduction of Christianity to the local population. McGilvary acknowledged the importance of medical facilities in assisting the work of a missionary when he wrote that:

... our little medicine chest gives up a favourable introduction to many of the people that would otherwise be indifferent to us.⁵²

It is not clear, however, whether the highland tribal minorities accepted Christianity primarily because of the medical and educational benefits they received as a "by-product"⁵³ of their conversion to Christianity. Nonetheless, the medical facilities and opportunities for education they received were often the first that they were provided with.

The favourable disposition that the people developed towards a missionary offering medicine is perhaps best indicated by the title "moh" (doctor) that the natives conferred upon the latter. Societies plagued by cholera, malaria, smallpox and goitre were relieved by the medical help that the "mohs" offered them. Some of these people were later attracted to the teachings of the "mohs". In subsequent years, a significant number of the people who had benefited from the medical relief offered by the missionaries accepted the religious teachings of the missionaries.

The Nan Chai and Noi Sunya Affair (1869)

Soon after Nan Inta converted to Christianity in January, 1869, six other persons namely Noi Sunya (a native doctor), Nai Kanta, Nan Chai, Boon Ma, Sen Ya Wichai and Ngiew joined the Presbyterian Church of Chiang Mai.⁵⁴ In March the same year, McGilvary, in obvious anxiety, wrote to Rev. Irving, the Secretary of the Mission Board stationed in New York, indicating the uncertainty that awaited the Laos Mission in Chiang Mai. McGilvary's remark that "I have the impression that the New Year will be a crisis in the history of the Mission" was indeed a premonition of what was to

come.⁵⁵ Given the increasing number of locals publicly professing Christianity, McGilvary and his colleague, Jonathan Wilson, anticipated that there would soon be a reaction from the ruling class.

In April 1869, Dr. S.R. House wrote from Bangkok to notify Rev. Irving that the ruling Chiang Mai nobles had accused the missionaries of being the cause of various calamities in northern Siam. The famine due to rice shortage in northern Siam in 1869 was viewed as a direct result of the arrival and subsequent residence of foreigners in their country.⁵⁶ The United States Acting Consul, N.A. McDonald, who was also an interpreter for the Siamese government and a missionary in Bangkok, clarified, and later, resolved the matter. In his reply to the Board, McDonald wrote:

...there must be some mistake about Mr. McGilvary's being the cause of the scarcity of rice in the first year named, in as much as he had not even left Bangkok at the time that year's scant harvest was gathered, and now this year [1869], though he is still there it is understood the harvest is quite abundant.⁵⁷

McDonald further reminded the authorities of the famine that befell Korat not too long ago and added that no foreigners had until then ever resided in Korat. For that reason, a similar calamity in Chiang Mai could not be attributed to the presence of foreigners.⁵⁸

The matter was resolved following McDonald's explanation but further tension developed between the *Chao luang* and the missionaries. This time the problem that arose in Chiang Mai led to intervention from Bangkok. The incident was, at any rate, the first of many more incidents that saw Bangkok gradually extending its hitherto invisible but henceforth increasingly visible influence to the north.

The fact that the missionaries could command respect and support from the Chief's own subjects threatened the position of the *Chao luang* who was practically the absolute ruler in Chiang Mai. The growing popularity and influence of the Christian mission and its evangelical work among his subjects also threatened the *Chao luang*'s venerable position as the defender of Buddhism.

Using the pretext that his subjects failed to perform *corvee* labour and had abstained from work on a Sunday, Prince Kawilorot ordered the two converts, Nan Chai and Noi Sunya, to be detained. In spite of the fact that their respective masters had exempted Nan Chai and Noi Sunya from work on Sunday to enable them to attend Sunday worship, the *Chao luang* ordered their detention. Then, in September 1869, the *Chao luang* ordered the execution of Nan Chai and Noi Sunya without a trial.⁵⁹

This incident, subsequently, led to a series of communications involving Bangkok, the missionaries and the *Chao luang*. The missionaries had contacted N.A. McDonald in Bangkok to seek assistance and protection from the Siamese government. Soon afterwards, Bangkok sent an official royal messenger to Chiang Mai, accompanied by McDonald and S.C. George, both from the Presbyterian Mission in Bangkok. However, the letter from Bangkok carried by the messenger to the northern *Chao luang* did not refer to the September, 1869 execution at all.⁶⁰ Instead, in a private note addressed to the missionaries and carried by the Siamese messenger, the Siamese Regent said with regard to the executed persons that:

[the] Laos Christians were the King's own slaves, if he chose to kill them we have no right to interfere.⁶¹

The Regent's note to the missionaries indicated that he was reluctant to sour the traditional cordial relations between the centre and the northern states. Bangkok, until then, respected the autonomy of the *Chao luang*. At this juncture, Bangkok refrained from giving direct orders or instructions to the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai. McDonald's conclusion was that Bangkok's attitude resulted from the "slight" hold that the Siamese government had upon the Chief of Chiang Mai. He further added that the Siamese government feared getting into any difficulty with the *Chao luang* "lest he should cause them trouble".⁶² Bangkok's unwillingness to confront the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai over the 1869 issue left McDonald with little choice but to "try and smooth matters over so that the missionaries might remain there".⁶³

An audience with the *Chao luang*, attended by the prince and princess and officers in his *muang*, was held on 28 December, 1869.⁶⁴ At first, the *Chao luang* said that the execution took place not because the accused were Christians but because they had refused to do government work (corvee). McGilvary, insensitive to the dangerous situation, accused the *Chao luang* of pretense and conceit. Worse still, he called the *Chao luang* a liar. The enraged *Chao luang* declared that he "would kill every man that should dare to become a Christian, that he regarded every man who rebelled against his god as rebel against himself".⁶⁵

This must have been the first time that the *Chao luang* had ever been challenged in the presence of his subjects. He became more hostile and very determined to prevent the spread of Christianity.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the *Chao luang* cautioned that any person "who visited, dealt with or in any way aided or assisted" the missionaries would be duly punished.⁶⁷ Servants employed by the missionaries, fearing the *Chao luang's* wrath left

the employ of their masters in haste. No one among the northern Thai would readily sell or supply the missionaries with provisions or any other necessities. The missionaries began to live in fear of violence.

The right of a patron to call his subjects (*phrai*) to serve him under the *corvee* system was a feature of the traditional social structure of Siam. The Christians' request to be exempted from work on Sundays demonstrated that their new faith meant more to them than the system to which they had traditionally adhered.⁶⁹ This re-directing of allegiance from the patron to the missionaries and their new faith threatened the traditional social structure of the northern states of Siam.

S.C. George who accompanied the Siamese Commissioner to Chiang Mai raised an important point in his letter to Rev. Irving. George explained that the Chief of Chiang Mai regarded the acceptance of Christianity among his subjects as an indication of disloyalty, firstly, to Lord Buddha and, secondly, to him. In S.C. George's words:

If his people wished to go with the foreigners they must go to a foreign country; but they could not do so in his country, that if his people would not worship the god Buddha, they would not likewise be loyal to him and that McGilvary had not told him at the first that he was going to make converts.⁷⁰

The point to be stressed here is that the missionaries failed to understand that the *Chao luang*, to the locals, embodied the virtues of Buddhism. He had the divine right to rule in his *muang*. The righteous virtues inherent in the ruling *Chao* guaranteed the well-being of his people. The *Chao luang*, who was also a *Chao Chiwit* (Lord of Life) in his *muang*, elevated himself to a status similar to that of a *dharmaraja*. It was his

duty to defend Buddhism and to provide for the welfare of his people. In return the people of his *muang* obeyed his rule and revered him.

Possibly the *Chao luang* was not fully aware of the implications and consequences when he agreed to the establishment of a Christian mission in Chiang Mai. When the missionaries approached him in Bangkok, in 1866, for permission to establish a mission in Chiang Mai, for the purpose of teaching religion, establishing schools and caring for the sick, he had readily consented. But, after the 1869 killing, the *Chao luang* claimed that he was not told that the missionaries were "going to make converts". The *Chao luang* appeared not to have understood the link between teaching Christianity and the conversion to Christianity of his people. To him, teaching the religion was harmless, but for his people to accept a foreign religion was tantamount to disloyalty and disrespect to him.

The missionaries, on the other hand, McGilvary in particular, were anxious that the matter should be resolved in the northern court or the *sanam*. McGilvary alleged that the *Chao luang* and the officers of the *sanam* had denied the two converts a trial before the death sentence was passed and carried out. What McGilvary did not understand was that the concept of civil rights as advocated by him was of Western (American) origin. It was a concept that was in direct contrast to the concept of traditional hierarchical order as practised by Thai society. The northern Thais had their own system of administering justice. The *Chao luang* who was a *Chao Chiwit* (Lord of Life) had the power to pass judgements and his people were obliged to abide by his judgements. Challenging a judgement by the *Chao Chiwit* was unheard of during that time. This was particularly true of the reign of Chao Kawilorot (1856-1870).

Chao Kawilorot was not only a *Chao Chiwit*, he was renamed *Chao Chiwit Aw* or "Lord of Life Take" by the villagers. It seems that whenever Chao Kawilorot became angry with someone who had displeased him, he would say "ow" which means "take".⁷¹ His guards would then seize the culprit and have him beheaded. If this was the case, then the execution of the converts, Nan Chai and Noi Sunya, was unlikely to be the first carried out without a trial. But it was, of course, the first that attracted the attention and became the concern of Americans. Given a situation where the *Chao*, traditionally, had been able to mete out, arbitrarily, capital punishment and the fact that his authority was challenged for the first time by a foreigner, the *Chao*, not surprisingly, refused to deliberate further on the issue.

McGilvary insisted on pursuing the matter and refused to abandon his mission station. His colleague, Wilson, as well as Revs. McDonald and George suggested withdrawing from Chiang Mai because it was no longer safe for the missionaries and their families to remain there. Wilson suggested that they re-establish the mission at Tak, a border town between the north and south. In the midst of the uncertainty that befell the Laos Mission in Chiang Mai, *Chao luang* Kawilorot was preparing to leave for Bangkok on a tribute paying mission. In a surprising turn of events, Kawilorot, just as he was leaving Chiang Mai, assured McGilvary that the missionaries could remain in Chiang Mai until he returned from Bangkok. Kawilorot's assurance came as a temporary relief but it gave little hope for the future of the Laos Mission in Chiang Mai.

Disappointed with the Bangkok government's reaction to the crisis, the American Consul, General J.W. Partridge, decided to deal with the problem. In 1870,

Partridge urged Bangkok to fulfil the stipulations as agreed to in the treaty between the United States and Siam. He referred to the treaty which accorded protection rights to American citizens in Siam. Partridge wrote from Bangkok to the Department of State, and Washington's reply was that the Siamese government had clearly violated Articles (I) and (VI) of the United States-Siam Treaty of 29, May, 1856.⁷² Article (I) of the treaty stated that:

... all American citizens, in that country, shall receive from its government full protection and assistance to enable them to reside there in security.⁷³

Article (VI), further, provided for freedom of religious worship. It called for the "free exercise of their religion, and for their right to employ Siamese subjects and servants".⁷⁴

Partridge charged that the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai had seized and beheaded the two servants of the American citizens despite the latter's protests and "without any notice whatever to the Consul of the United States in Siam".⁷⁵ In a letter dated 15 April 1870, addressed to Chow Phya Bhanuwongse, the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Partridge requested, on behalf of the United States government, "indemnity for the past and security for the future".⁷⁶ Again, on 26th. May 1870, Partridge wrote to the Foreign Minister and, this time, sounding very impatient, wished to know "definitely, whether the government of Siam will protect the two American citizens and their families resident at that city".⁷⁷

The reply from Chow Phya Bhanuwongse came within five days of Partridge's letter of 26th. May 1870. Bhanuwongse had communicated with the Regent of Siam, who was the Chief Executive of the Siamese Kingdom vice Prince Chulalongkorn who was too young to assume the throne of Siam. The Regent cited the illness of Chao

Kawilorot as a reason for the delay in deciding on the case raised by the Consul. The Regent, however, assured that the *Chao Upparat* (second most important office after the Chief) of Chiang Mai, who was expected to succeed the ailing Kawilorot, had been assigned to "assist, nourish and protect them and suffer no more trouble to befall them as before"⁷⁸. Upon the death of Kawilorot on 29th. June 1870,⁷⁹ the *Chao Upparat* by the name of Chao Intarnon, who was also the son-in-law of Kawilorot, assumed the chieftainship of Chiang Mai.

The pressure that the missionaries put on Bangkok through their diplomatic representatives forced Bangkok to assume a more assertive role in the arbitration of the case involving the Laos missionaries and *Chao luang* Kawilorot. It was, at any rate, one of the earliest occasions for Bangkok to make its presence directly felt, although gradually, in the politics of the northern states of Siam except that the Regent who was really in charge of the government affairs in Siam did not then envisage the establishment of a centralized nation as desired later by Chulalongkorn. Therefore, it was when Chulalongkorn ruled as the King (1873-1910) that Bangkok's policies towards the north became more discernible.

What is clear from the 1869 incident is that the Siamese government preferred the missionaries to return to Bangkok to avoid a confrontation with the *Chao luang* of Chiang Mai. But the missionaries chose to remain where they were. It was only when their diplomatic representative, the United States Consul in Bangkok, decided to intervene and demand action from the Bangkok government that the latter began to interfere in the affairs of the north.

Why was Bangkok hesitant to confront the *Chao luang*? Bangkok's attitude to the September 1869 killing can be understood only by first taking a closer look at the politics of the Kingdom of Siam in that year. To begin with, Siam was not ruled by a King at that time. Prince Chulalongkorn was only fifteen when his father, the late King Mongkut, died in 1868. As the prince was too young to ascend the throne, the chief nobles of the country decided to appoint a Regent, who would rule until Chulalongkorn "came of Kingly age". In 1869, the highest authority in Siam was the Regent. *Chao luang* Kawilorot paid allegiance as ruler of a *muang prathetsarat* to the monarch in Bangkok. In the absence of one, and given the fact that the letter carried by the Bangkok Commissioner came from the Regent, Kawilorot could afford to be uncompromising.

Bangkok too was aware of the fact that the northern states were then less dependent on Bangkok for military help against possible Burmese invasion. This was especially true after the British occupation of the greater part of Burma. Under British occupation, Burma became less of a military threat to northern Siam. To the northern states then, there was no strong inducement for remaining loyal to Bangkok since the need for military support was no longer so essential. This could have been one reason for the uncompromising stance taken by the *Chao luang*. On the other hand, the British presence in Burma and their expanding economic interests in the region, in addition to the French presence in Indochina, worried Bangkok, and, in later years, alerted her to the need to gain control of the northern states. Bangkok's policies towards the northern states became more assertive.

The missionaries were momentarily freed from the predicament which threatened their presence in Chiang Mai. But they soon encountered other problems. In the meantime, the peace arising from the Bangkok government's assurance of protection and the death of Chow Kawilorot in 1870 enabled them to embark more vigorously on their mission work.

The Laos Mission, 1869-1878: From Persecution to Toleration

Between 1869 and 1875, the Laos Mission had an average of about five members. The absence of a substantial Christian congregation during that period was mainly due to the hostile environment in which the mission had to operate. As mentioned earlier, in 1869, two earliest (out of seven) converts were killed. The remaining five stayed with the mission amidst fear and anxiety. Upon the death of *Chao luang* Kawilorot in 1870, the tension somewhat eased. Chao Intarnon (1870-1897), the successor, was more tolerant towards the foreigners and allowed them to continue to stay in Chiang Mai. In 1872, there was an addition to the congregation. Nan Ta joined the mission. But, in 1873, two members of the mission fell ill and died soon afterwards.⁸⁰

Between 1873 and 1875, mission membership remained at four and all members were male. In 1876, mission membership rose to nine. The increase was in part due to the presence of a Siamese judge in Chiang Mai following the signing of the Chiang Mai Treaty of 1874. The presence of a legal officer from Bangkok in Chiang Mai assured the Christian converts and the general public that they could seek legal redress through Bangkok should they be harmed.⁸¹

The year 1875 was important in the history of the Laos Mission. The first northern Thai native, Nan Inta, was elected by the Chiang Mai church as a ruling elder on the 10th of April.⁸² The appointment of a native as one of the members of the church leadership, along with the sense of security created by the presence of Siamese officials, allowed for growth in mission membership.

Between 1876 and 1878, there was moderate increase in membership as the mission began a gradual revival. The increase included the first woman convert; she was baptized in January, 1876.⁸³ The first chapel was built in northern Siam in early 1876, followed by a Sunday School,⁸⁴ started in November, 1876. In 1877, the first week of prayer was held in the northern Thai church. At the end of 1878, a new Christian community, comprising men, women and children began to emerge. The existence of Christian families led to infant baptisms and attracted more Christian followers.

In 1878, a local event which took place in Chiang Mai, set in motion developments that led to the introduction of an edict from Bangkok. The edict was to have important consequences on the growth of the church. More important still, the edict was the first of its kind in that it was introduced by a Bangkok Commissioner in the northern states. The edict, proclaimed in late 1878, was called the Edict of Religious Toleration. What effect did the edict have on the traditional Bangkok-Chiang Mai relations?

The Edict of Religious Toleration: 1878

The proclamation of the edict was necessary owing to a problem which arose from the first Christian marriage that was to have taken place in the northern Thai church. The patriarch of the bride's family who was also the tribal head of the bride's and the groom's clan demanded the customary "spirit fee" from both the families. The "spirit fee" was a traditional practice of legalising a marriage among the northern Thai. The Christian converts, who no longer adhered to the traditional norms of spirit worship, accordingly renounced the practice. Further tension arose when the *Chao Upparat* (ranked second to the chief) who was somewhat more powerful than the chief (Chao Intarnon) himself, refused to support the missionaries' plea to sanction the wedding. The Siamese Commissioner who was stationed at Chiang Mai following the Treaty of 1874 was not able to help. The Commissioner, Phraya Thep Worachun, although sympathetic to the missionaries, told McGilvary that he had "no authority to interfere in local or tribal matters".⁸⁵

Later, with the support of the Commissioner, McGilvary referred the matter to Bangkok, this time appealing for the extension of religious tolerance in northern Siam. The appeal was made through the United States Consul in Bangkok, David. B. Sickels.⁸⁶ The King in Bangkok referred the matter back to the Siamese Commissioner in Chiang Mai. The Commissioner was authorised to issue an edict proclaiming religious tolerance in northern Siam. The edict was issued on 8 October 1878. It confirmed that:

... if any person or persons wish to embrace the Christian religion they are freely allowed to follow their own choice, and this proclamation is designed from this time forth to remove any fear that may have existed to the contrary.⁸⁷

The proclamation of this edict had several implications. To the missionaries and the mission, the edict enabled further expansion of activities. There was an increase of more than fifty percent in membership of the Laos Mission in 1879, a year after the edict was proclaimed. As the edict assured the freedom to profess a faith of one's choice, the northern Thai were less fearful to declare their acceptance of Christianity.

The edict stressed that:

... as religious and civil duties do not conflict, any religion that is seen to be true may be embraced by any person without restraint; that the responsibility of a correct or wrong decision rests with the individuals making it; that there is nothing in the foreign treaty, nor in the laws and customs of Siam to throw any restrictions on the religious worship of any.

In a letter dated 5 February 1879, United States Consul Sickels wrote to the Assistant Secretary of State in Washington that the representatives of the mission at Chiang Mai were "perfectly satisfied with the steps taken by the Siamese government and the local effect produced".⁸⁹

As regards the question of foreigners, particularly American citizens, employing locals, the edict specified that "no obstacle is to be thrown in the way of American citizens employing any persons needed for their service".⁹⁰ The edict also stated that the Christians were under no compulsion to perform the customary spirit-worship or to work on Sundays. It further reminded the local authorities not to demand work from the Christians which their religion forbade. The Christians were free to observe the Sabbath except in times of war or government work when they were called upon to serve.⁹¹ The royal mandate from the King to the Commissioner made this point very clear. In the

official translation of the proclamation, the Commissioner, as advised by the King, spelt out the following:

Whenever there is government work, persons who hold to the religion of the Lord Jesus must perform it. No religion is henceforth allowed to interfere on government work.⁹²

The Siamese Commissioner in Chiang Mai was authorised to issue the proclamation. A Siamese Commissioner in the north had never before been granted the authority to write out (word) an edict from the King. This was a departure from the norm because an important matter involving the King's subjects was delegated to the Commissioner. Furthermore, the incident allowed the Bangkok appointed representative increased powers to act on behalf of the Siamese King. The use of the title "*Phu Samret Ratchakan*" ("he who fulfils the King's work")⁹³, for the first time, in the edict by the Commissioner clearly indicated that the Commissioner was a government representative of rank and this, to a certain extent, marked "the passing of the sceptre from the Lao princes".⁹⁴ In other words, as Nigel Brailey has pointed out, the Laos Mission, through the Edict of 1878, contributed to the growing breakdown in local lines of authority in the northern states of Siam.⁹⁵

Greater power entrusted to the Siamese Commissioner, as a representative of the government, enabled him to implement more assertively Bangkok-designed policies in the *muang prathetsarat*. The *Chao luang's* acceptance of an edict written by a Siamese representative meant that he now recognised the authority of the Siamese representative as coming from Bangkok. Mistreating or insulting the Commissioner, in other words, meant an indirect insult to the supreme ruler, the King of Siam. From then on, the

Siamese representative began to play a more important role in the politics of the northern region.

The edict, however, was to be implemented in only three of the northern states. These were Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang. The proclamation of the edict, in general, facilitated the gradual incorporation of the northern states into the central administration, while at the same time allowing the locals the freedom to profess a religion of each person's choice in the Kingdom of Siam.

The Laos Mission, 1878-1910

Between 1879 and 1881, the mission membership increased from 49 to 127. In 1883, McGilvary returned from his second furlough with new missionary recruits. With a larger force of missionaries on the field, a wider outreach was possible. At the end of that year, mission membership increased to 150.

That same year, the Chiang Mai Treaty of 1883 came into effect. Article (V) of the Treaty provided for the establishment of police posts on the Siamese bank of the Salween river which formed the boundary between Chiang Mai and Burmese territory. Security measures such as this assured foreigners and Christians of protection from ill-treatment and possible persecution. This was likely another reason that contributed to the increase in mission membership.

The year 1883 also proved eventful to the Christian community in northern Siam. A presbytery of the North Laos called the Presbytery of Chiang Mai was organised under the Synod of Pennsylvania.⁹⁶ The formation of a presbytery meant that the Chiang Mai church could have a programme of its own in church administration

and a system of ordaining pastors and organising congregations. This was the first effort by the Laos Mission to provide formal training to native Christians in order that they might take up future ministerial positions in the church.

Shortly after the signing of the Chiang Mai Treaty of 1883 in September of that year, Prince Pichit, brother of King Chulalongkorn, was appointed Commissioner to northern Siam. During his visit to Chiang Mai, Pichit expressed his hope that:

... the Mission would enlarge its borders and start a station at Lakon [Lampang] as a "civilizing agency".⁹⁷

Pichit went on to purchase a piece of land in Lampang and presented it to the missionaries to enable them to build a mission station there. Apart from the land to build a station, Prince Pichit, on the orders of the King of Siam, gave 2000 rupees to the missionaries to start a mission hospital in Lampang. The Prince also provided elephants and guides to the missionaries so that they could visit the site of the new station in Lampang.⁹⁸

Bangkok was obviously pleased with the work of the missionaries and, therefore, encouraged the latter to open more stations in the northern region. Bangkok also viewed the Christian missionaries as civilising agents. The money donated by the Siamese government to the missionaries towards the construction of a mission hospital clearly indicated that Bangkok approved of and encouraged the work of the missionaries, especially in the medical field.

The mission station at Lampang was established in 1885.⁹⁹ There was an increase of more than sixty percent in mission membership between 1884 and 1885. In 1887, there was another large increase in mission membership. This increase can be

said to have resulted from the "unusual number of children and of heads of households received and the number of Christian marriages".¹⁰⁰ The formation of a Christian community was important for the continued growth of the Christian congregation in northern Siam. The 1887 report indicated that, on two occasions, three generations from a single household were represented in the adult baptisms.¹⁰¹

In September 1891, W.C. Dodd was granted permission by the Laos Mission to embark upon the work of opening a station in Lamphun.¹⁰² Rev. W.C. Dodd was its first resident missionary.¹⁰³ The opening of a station in Lamphun contributed to a rise in mission membership. That year (1891), total mission membership rose to 1113. Another new station was opened in Phrae following the approval of a proposal to open the station there on 9 December 1892. Dr. Briggs was its resident missionary.

In 1894 a station was established at Nan.¹⁰⁵ With the opening of a station at Nan, the Laos Mission had, by the end of 1894, established stations in all of the five northern tributary states, namely Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan. The opening of a station at Nan was, to a great extent, prompted by the presence of French forces on the east side of the Mekong. Nan was located to the extreme east from Chiang Mai. It was also located closest to the French-occupied territories on the east side of the Mekong. There was a growing fear among the Presbyterians that the French might precede the Presbyterians and spearhead the establishment of a Catholic Church in Nan. The eventual opening of a station at Nan must have been a great relief to the Presbyterian missionaries.

Although the station at Nan was the last to be opened among the mission stations in the five northern tributary states, it was the first that emphasized a

self-governing and self-supporting mission. The idea, mooted by Dr. Irwin, encouraged people to pay in cash for the medical treatment that they received at the mission hospital or for the medicine obtained from the mission dispensary. But due to the scarcity of money in circulation in Nan, people continued to pay in kind.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the idea of a self-supporting mission did not completely take off. In other places, the missionaries introduced and encouraged the concept of cash payment which was later increasingly encouraged by the central government. Hence, it was with greater ease that Bangkok later introduced a capitation tax in lieu of corvee as the people had by then accustomed themselves to the idea of paying in cash for purchases made.

Between 1898 and 1910, mission membership grew steadily from 2110 to 4038. In 1900, there was a total of 15 churches, 100 elected elders and 1300 students in Sunday Schools in all the fifteen congregations. Yet, the mission's proselytizing activities in northern Siam failed to penetrate the larger Buddhist community. Most of the mission members were persons from marginal communities, prominent among them were the tribes-people who were mostly animists prior to the arrival of Christianity.

Others who converted included persons accused of witchcraft and as such were ostracised by the Buddhists. Then, there were those seeking employment with the missionaries as well as those who were desperately sick or in need of aid during famine.¹⁰⁷ Philip J. Hughes, in his study of the Christian faith in northern Siam, explained that one of the important reasons for people becoming Christians and remaining in the Christian community was that the missionaries were good patrons. In Hughes' words,

... people attached themselves to the missionaries, and looked to them for help and employment, while accepting the missionaries' religion.¹⁰⁸

The missionaries, through their schools, hospitals, press and churches, offered various positions to the locals. These included positions as pastors, teachers, nurses, medical staff, servants, cooks, gardeners, cleaners, watchmen for mission property and carriers for touring.¹⁰⁹ Hughes went on to say that "between 1910 and 1915, there were at least several hundred people in the direct employ of the mission in northern Siam".¹¹⁰

The Norwegian explorer, Carl Bock, in his account narrating his expedition to northern Siam and Laos, reported that there were those who embraced Christianity for "temporal rather than spiritual benefits"¹¹¹. Bock, while travelling through northern Siam in 1881, observed that among those who had converted to Christianity were people who had hoped to redeem themselves from slavery or those who desired to seek employment from the missionaries for the cash returns that they received. Slaves whom the missionaries redeemed, for example, by paying their masters a certain amount of redemption fee, not surprisingly began to look upon the missionaries as their new patrons. Jonathan Wilson of the Laos Mission shared Bock's view. In 1882, he wrote of the poor quality of the converts. According to him:

... some of these people have chosen Christianity as a refuge. Our protection. They do not seem to grow.¹¹²

Perhaps, the notion that "where Buddhism has prevailed, the gospel has languished"¹¹³ is appropriate in the case of the Laos Mission's evangelising work in Siam as it was with many of the Christian missions in Buddhist nations such as Japan, Vietnam and Burma. Mission activity in social terms, on the other hand (for example, its work in the fields of medicine, education and printing), was better received by the larger Buddhist population of northern Siam and it contributed immensely to social change in the north.

But the most important contribution of the Laos Mission was the inculcation of progressive ideas in northern Siam. The emphasis placed on education for women can be considered as an example of a progressive idea. So too was the introduction and use of scientific tools to understand astronomy in place of astrology. Thus, Carl Bock summed up the work of the Laos Mission in the following manner:

[It was aimed] not so much at proselytizing the natives as at instructing them and inducing them to apply themselves to industries of a nature to elevate their minds and to improve their general tone.¹¹⁴

Although many more questions can be asked about the spread of Christianity in northern Siam, within the context of the present study, it is pertinent to point out that the Laos Mission played a significant role in effecting social change in northern Siam and, perhaps no less important, as it has been demonstrated, it provided the occasion favourable for the extension of Bangkok control to northern Siam.

¹ The Foreign Missionary, May, 1882, Vol. 40, p. 509.

² Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand, 1828-1958, Bangkok: Church of Christ (Thailand), 1958, p. 5.

³ Kennon Breazeale, "English Missionaries Among the Thai", in Ronald Renard (ed.), Anuson Walter Vella, Chiang Mai: Payap University, Walter F. Vella Fund and Honolulu Centre for Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii, 1986, p. 209.

Some books state that Gutzlaff came to Siam on his own after severing his ties with the Netherlands Missionary Society.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand, p. 6.
See also, G.B. McFarland (ed.), Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions In Siam, 1828-1928, Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1928, p. 2.

⁶ For details on Robert Hunter see Adey Moore, "An Early British Merchant in Bangkok", in Selected Articles from the Journal of Siam Society, Vol. 8, Bangkok, 1959.

⁷ G.B. McFarland, (ed.), Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, p. 3.

⁸ Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand, p. 7.

⁹ G.B. McFarland (ed.), Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, p. 9.

¹⁰ Cornelia Kneedler Hudson, "Daniel McGilvary in Siam: Foreign Missions, the Civil War, and Presbyterian Unity", in American Presbyterians 69:4, Winter 1991, p. 284.

Cornelia Hudson is the great grand-daughter of Daniel McGilvary.

¹¹ G.B. McFarland, (ed.), Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, p. 27.

¹² Ibid., p. 11.

¹³ For an account of the life and work of D.B. Bradley see Donald C. Lord, Mo Bradley and Thailand, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1969.

¹⁴ Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work In Thailand, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶ G.B. McFarland (ed.), Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, p. 19.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸ See letter dated 10 Aug, 1866 from D.B. Bradley's daughter, Sophia McGilvary to her brother- in-law, in NCP, 25 Sept, 1867.

¹⁹ Herbert R. Swanson, Khrischak Muang Nua: A Study in Northern Thai Church History, Bangkok: Chuan Press, 1984, p. 7.

²⁰ Cornelia Kneedler Hudson, "Daniel McGilvary in Siam: Foreign Missions, the Civil War, and Presbyterian Unity", p. 283.

²¹ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, New York: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1912, p. 31.

²² Cornelia Kneedler Hudson, "Daniel McGilvary in Siam: Foreign Missions, the Civil War, and Presbyterian Unity", p. 284.

²³ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 43.

²⁴ Herbert R. Swanson, 'This Heathen People: The Cognitive Sources Of American Missionary Westernizing Activities In Northern Siam, 1867-1889', M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1987, p. 41.

²⁵ Lillian J. Curtis, The Laos of North Siam, New York: Fleming H. Revel, 1903, p. 253.

See also, Herbert R. Swanson, 'The Cognitive Sources Of American Missionary Westernizing Activities In Northern Siam', p. 41.

²⁶ Kennon Breazeale, "English Missionaries Among the Thai", p. 221.

²⁷ For details on Malacca see Brian Harrison, Waiting For China: The Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca, 1818-1843, and Early Nineteenth Century Missions, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1979.

²⁸ G.B. McFarland (ed.), Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, p. 28.

²⁹ Kawl Thang Vuta, 'A Brief History Of The Planting and Growth of the Church in Burma', D. Miss. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, 1983, p. 79.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³¹ Abbot Low Moffat, Mongkut, The King of Siam, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961, p. 19.

³² Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia In The Nineteenth Century: The Case of Siam", in JSS, Vol. 64, 1976, p. 111. (See Appendix).

- ³³ Cornelia K. Hudson, "Daniel McGilvary in Siam: Foreign Missions, the Civil War, and Presbyterian Unity", p. 285.
- ³⁴ Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia", p. 111.
- ³⁵ Herbert R. Swanson, Khrischak Muang Nua, p. 9.
- ³⁶ Kenneth E. Wells, History Of Protestant Work In Thailand, p. 68.
- ³⁷ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 45.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 49.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 58.
- ⁴⁰ NCP, 25 Sept, 1867.
See also, Daniel McGilvary, "The Claims of the Laos Upon Our Church" and "Interest among the Laos" in The Foreign Missionary, Vol. 25, June 1866-May 1867, pp. 93-94.
- ⁴¹ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 59.
- ⁴² BOFM, McDonald to Irving, 10 Sept, 1866, Roll. 182, Vol.3.
- ⁴³ Cornelia Hudson, 'Biography of Daniel McGilvary', unpublished, typescript copy, Payap Archives, Chapter VI. (no page).
See also, Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 69.
- ⁴⁴ BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 10 Sept, 1866, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁴⁵ Cornelia Hudson, 'Biography of Daniel McGilvary', Chapter VI. (no page).
- ⁴⁶ BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 12 Jan, 1869, Roll. 182, Vol.3.
- ⁴⁷ Missionary reports commonly use the term paganism to refer to traditional or indigenous beliefs.
- ⁴⁸ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 203.
- ⁴⁹ *Nirvana* means the final emancipation of the soul by the extinction of all desire.
- ⁵⁰ NCP, 3 Feb, 1886.
- ⁵¹ For an account of the Christian missionaries in Burma see, Helen G. Trager, Burma Through Alien Eyes: Missionary Views of the Burmese in the Nineteenth Century, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966.
- ⁵² BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 9 July, 1867, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
See also, NCP, 14 July, 1869.

- ⁵³ Nicholas Tapp, "The Impact of Missionary Christianity Upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Hmong" in JSEAS, Vol. 20, March, 1989, pp. 70-71.
- ⁵⁴ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, pp. 99-100.
- ⁵⁵ BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 1 March, 1869, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁵⁶ BOFM, S.R. House to Irving, 16 April, 1869, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Herbert R. Swanson, Khrischak Muang Nua, pp. 14-15.
- ⁶⁰ BOFM, McDonald to Irving, 2 Feb, 1870, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁶¹ BOFM, J. Wilson to Irving, 24 Jan, 1870, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁶² BOFM, McDonald to Irving, 2 Feb, 1870, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ NCP, 27 April, 1870.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Jonathan Wilson wrote to the BOFM that the *chao luang* had made his stand clear when he remarked, "If the missionaries teach their religion and continue to make Christians we will banish them from the country". See BOFM, J. Wilson to Irving, 24 Jan, 1870, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁶⁷ DUSCB, J.W. Partridge (U.S. Consul) to I.C.B. Davis (Assistant Secretary of State), No. 26, 21 July, 1870, Vol. 4.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Herbert R. Swanson, Khrischak Muang Nua, p. 13.
- ⁷⁰ BOFM, S.C. George to Irving, 2 May, 1870, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.
- ⁷¹ Katherine Ann Bowie, 'Peasant Perspectives On the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai In The Nineteenth Century: Implications for the Understanding of Peasant Political Expression', Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1988, p. 304.

⁷² BOFM, Department of State Washington to Partridge Esqr, 5 Oct, 1870, Roll 182, Vol. 3.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ DUSCB, J.W. Partridge (U.S. Consul) to the *Chow Phya Bhanuwongse* (Minister of Foreign Affairs), 15 April, 1870, Vol. 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ DUSCB, J.W. Partridge to the *Phra Khlang*, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 May, 1870, Vol. 4.

⁷⁸ DUSCB, "Reply of the Regent of Siam relative to Chiang Mai matters and protection to American citizens there", 31 May, 1870, Vol. 4.

⁷⁹ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 135.

⁸⁰ BOFM, Wilson to Irving, 1 Sept, 1873, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.

⁸¹ BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 4 Dec, 1876, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.

⁸² BOFM, Wilson to Executive Committee of the BOFM, 30 Sept, 1874, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.

⁸³ BOFM, McGilvary to Irving, 22 Feb, 1876, Roll. 182, Vol. 3.

⁸⁴ Herbert R. Swanson, Khrischak Muang Nua, p. 26.

⁸⁵ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao, p. 209.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 212.

⁸⁷ NCP, 12 Feb, 1879. See under heading "Proclamation of Religious Tolerance for the Laos".

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ DUSCB, David B. Sickels to Ass. Secretary of State, Washington D.C., 5 Feb, 1879, Vol. 6.

⁹⁰ NCP, 12 Feb, 1879.

⁹¹ Ibid.

- ⁹² DUSCB, D.B. Sickels to Ass. Sec. of State, Washington D.C., 5 February, 1879, Vol. 6.
- ⁹³ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and Lao, p. 220.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Nigel J. Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam", (Part II), in JSEAS, Vol. 11, No. 4, March 1974, p. 448.
- ⁹⁶ BOFM, D. McGilvary to Irving, 26 April, 1883, Roll. 183, Vol. 4. See also, Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century Among The Siamese and Lao, p. 257.
- ⁹⁷ BOFM, D. McGilvary to Irving, 9 July, 1884, Roll. 183, Vol. 4.
- ⁹⁸ NCP, 7 Oct, 1885.
- ⁹⁹ Daniel McGilvary, A Half Century Among The Siamese and the Lao, p. 264.
- ¹⁰⁰ BOFM, W.C. Dodd, "Report of the North Laos Mission For The Year Ending 1 October, 1887", Roll 188, Vol. 22.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² BOFM, W.C. Dodd, "Report of Lamphun Station, Laos Mission, 30 Nov, 1892", Roll. 188, Vol. 22.
Dodd's report claimed that the work of opening the new station at Lamphun began in 1891. Other sources however, state that the Lamphun station was established in the year 1889. See, Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work In Thailand, p. 96. This confusion arose mainly because the land for a missionary station (compound) at Lamphun was given to the Laos Mission by the governor of Lamphun in 1888. Thereafter, McGilvary fenced the area and erected a house on that land. In the meantime, a school was established and maintained at the compound. It was not until 1891, that the new station at Lamphun began operating.
- ¹⁰³ BOFM, James McKean, "Report of the Chiang Mai Station, 1 Dec 1890 to 1 Dec 1891, Roll. 188, Vol. 22.
- ¹⁰⁴ BOFM, Stanley K. Phraner, "Report for Chiang Mai, 1893", Roll. 188, Vol. 22.
- ¹⁰⁵ Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work In Thailand, p. 99.
- ¹⁰⁶ BOFM, John. H. Freeman, "Report for *muang* Nan, 1896", Roll. 188, Vol. 22.
- ¹⁰⁷ Philip J. Hughes, Proclamation and Response: A Study of the History of the Christian Faith in Northern Thailand, Chiang Mai: Payap University Archives, 1989 (Second Edition), pp. 20-22.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 21

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Carl Bock, Temples and Elephants: The narrative of a journey of exploration through upper Siam and Lao, Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1985 (reprint), p. 220.

¹¹² BOFM, Wilson to Irving, 25 May, 1882, Roll. 183, Vol. 4.

¹¹³ Ralph D. Winter and David A. Fraser, "World Mission Survey", in Ralph D. Winter and Stephen C. Hawthorne (eds.), Perspectives On The World Christian Movement, A Reader, California: William Carey Library, 1981, p. 342.

¹¹⁴ Carl Bock, Temples and Elephants, p. 220.