

การเมืองข้ามฝั่งโขง : ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างน่านกับสิบสองปันนา

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้ศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างน่านกับสิบสองปันนาระหว่างทันคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 เพื่อวิเคราะห์สาเหตุของสงครามเชียงตุงในศตวรรษ 1850 ผู้เขียนพบว่าความสัมพันธ์ที่ลึกซึ้งระหว่างน่านกับสิบสองปันนาและระบบรัฐบริษัทการที่สับสนไม่แน่นอนเป็นสาเหตุหนึ่งของสงคราม สาเหตุสำคัญประการหนึ่งที่ทำให้สยามโถมตีเชียงตุงและต่อมาบ้านพยาภัยบังคับให้เชียงแขงยอมรับอำนาจของสยามคือ ความต้องการของสยามที่จะขยายอำนาจเข้าไปสู่สิบสองปันนาและรัฐไทยอีก เพื่อที่จะปกครองบ้านเมืองฝั่งตะวันออกของแม่น้ำโขงได้โดยง่าย เพื่อให้บรรลุวัตถุประสงค์ดังกล่าวสยามต้องยึดครองเชียงตุงและบ้านเล็กเมืองน้อยใกล้เคียงที่อยู่ภายใต้ระบบบรัชส่องฝ่ายฟ้าหรือสามฝ่ายฟ้าภายใต้การปกครองของพม่า จีน และเวียดนามให้ได้ น่านเต็มใจสนับสนุนนโยบายขยายอำนาจของสยามและเป็นตัวแทนของสยามในการก่อตั้งอำนาจอิริยาบถในดินแดนเหล่านี้ ทั้งคู่แบ่งปันผลประโยชน์จากการทำสงคราม

น่านต้องการปกปักษากษาไฟร์เพลซา瓦ลีอีกต่อหนึ่งความก้าวหน้าที่ต้องมาเพราะกำลังคนมีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งต่อความเข้มแข็งทางการเมืองและเศรษฐกิจของรัฐ ความสัมพันธ์ทางการค้าก็เป็นอีกปัจจัยหนึ่งที่จะช่วยเพิ่มพูนอำนาจและความมั่งคั่งให้กับน่าน อำนาจทางการทหารของสยามทำให้อิทธิพลของน่านในฐานะตัวแทนสยามเด่นชัดขึ้น หลังจากสยามยุติสิกรรมเชียงตุงน่านยังคงขยายอำนาจไปยังบ้านเมืองอีกฝั่งหนึ่งของแม่น้ำโขงจนกระทั่งอังกฤษและฝรั่งเศสเข้ามายัดการปักปันเขตแดนในปี 1893 การเมืองสองฝั่งแม่น้ำโขงในคริสตศตวรรษที่ 19 ดำเนินไปภายใต้ระบบเครือญาติของกลุ่มคนที่พูดภาษาไทยสองภาษาฝ่ายฝั่งแม่น้ำนี้ ความสัมพันธ์ฉันบ้านพี่เมืองน้องทำให้น่านขยายอำนาจเข้าไปทางใต้ของสิบสองปันนาอย่างรวดเร็ว

คำสำคัญ : ฝั่งโขง, น่าน, สิบสองปันนา, สยาม, ระบบบรรณาการไทย

Politics Across the Mekong River: the Relationship Between Nan and Sipsong Panna in the Nineteenth Century

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the relationship between Nan and Sipsong Panna in the early nineteenth century as a means to explore the causes of the Chiang Tung invasions of the 1850s. The author found that close relationship between Nan and Sipsong Panna and the problematic Tai tributary system were the main causes of these wars. One of the main reasons that Siam started the invasions into Chiang Tung in the 1850s and later on, Nan attempted to force Chiang Khaeng to be under Siamese suzerainty was to extend its power to Sipsong Panna and other Tai states and to easily rule the east bank of the Mekong. However to reach that goal, Chiang Tung

and other small Tai states nearby had to be taken under Siam's control because these states had been under the same tributary system of being muang song fai fa or muangsamfai fa of China, Burma and Vietnam. Nan was willingly supporting Siam's expansionist policy, becoming the Siamese agent in establishing her suzerainty over this area. Both of them shared Interest and benefit from these wars. Nan wanted to protect the Lue people who were moved into its territory because manpower was very important for the state's strength politically and economically. The trade interaction across the Mekong River was also Nan's concern. Siamese military strength could make Nan's influence stronger as the agent of a super power. Even though Siam failed to seize Chiang Tung, Nan still continued its expansionist policy across the Mekong River until the border lines were settled by the French and the British in the year 1893. Politics across the Mekong River in the nineteenth century was carried out by kin relationships of the Tai speaking peoples living along this river. Nan expansion into the Lue areas south of Sipsong Panna was facilitated by their historical relationship as ban phi muangnong, village of the older sibling, city of the younger sibling.

Keywords : Mekong River, Nan, Sipsong Panna, Siam, Tai Tributary System

Nan was an old Tai state mentioned in Tai traditional chronicles ever since the thirteenth century. Among the Tai states in the north, Nan had been very close to Sukhothai politically and culturally until the latter was absorbed into the Ayutthaya kingdom in the late fifteenth century.¹ Nan became the northeastern administrative center of the Lan Na kingdom in the reign of the great king, King Tilokarat (1442-1487). Its rulers actively expanded Lan Na influence into Lan Sang and the northern part of present Vietnam where numerous Tai peoples were living at the time. During Burmese rule, Nan fought repeatedly to gain independence or at least autonomy. In the late eighteenth century, Nan and other Lan Na muang or states successfully drove the Burmese out of their territories and willingly paid allegiance to Siam.

In the nineteenth century Nan was prosperous and powerful when compared to Chiang Mai. Like other Lan Na states, it enjoyed autonomy and was considered one of Siam's most important tributary states, since it guarded the northern frontiers. The Siamese kings always recognized Nan's political and strategic importance. They built up a very friendly relationship with Nan, and like Chiang Mai, a ruler of Nan was given the title of phrachao prathetsarat (king of a tributary state) in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1871-1910) when the political situation in the Mekong area was very critical

1 Evidences of their close relationship are found in many temples where Sukhothai's art prevailed and in the stone inscriptions. Patipat Phumphongphate. *Pakinnaka Silapawatthanatham Muang Nan* vol. 1 (Chiang Mai: Samnak Silapakorn thi 7, 2007), pp.47-53.

(Prachum Phongsawadan Chabab Kanchanaphisak Lem 7 2002, 177). Interestingly, during the time that the Bangkok government was reducing the power of chao nai in Chiang Mai, it still tried to please the Nan chao nai. Nan's role was very crucial for protecting the territory Siam claimed on the west bank of the Mekong River all the way over to Luang Phrabang and further into the Sipsong Chuthai area in northern Vietnam.

The wealth and power of Nan resulted from its location as well as its strong relationship with the Tai states in the Mekong River basin. Early nineteenth century Nan frequently fought to gain power over the area across the Mekong River. The present map hides the fact that there were former dependents of Nan on the left side of the Mekong River basin extending to the border of Yunnan. Expanding its power to the upper Lao area where many Lue communities were located, Nan moved a large number of Lue people from Laos and Sipsong Panna to fill its own lands. Nangsu Phunna Muang Nan (the book of the history of the Muang Nan's rice fields) described the distance between Nan and many Lue cities in Sipsong Panna and Laos, which shows the close relationship between these people (Aroonrat 1985, 21).

Geographical location and the historical relationship between Nan and Sipsong Panna facilitated the settlement of these people in Nan. Siam consequently depended on Nan to expand its suzerainty over Lao and Lue states. Nan was a spearhead used to extend Siamese power to those areas for the benefit of Siam and itself. Until the late nineteenth century, international politics highlighted Nan's role as a defender of Siamese sovereignty in the Mekong River basin.

In this essay I examine the relationship between Nan and Sipsong Panna in the early nineteenth century as a means to explore the causes of the Chiang Tung invasions of the 1850s. I argue that close relationship between Nan and Sipsong Panna and the problematic Tai tributary system were the main causes of these wars. In spite of the Siamese failure to seize Chiang Tung, Nan continued its expansionist policy across the Mekong River until the border lines were settled by the French and the British in the year 1893. My research builds on Dr. Constance Wilson's research into late pre-modern Siam and on the complex political relationships that Siam had with its tributary states.

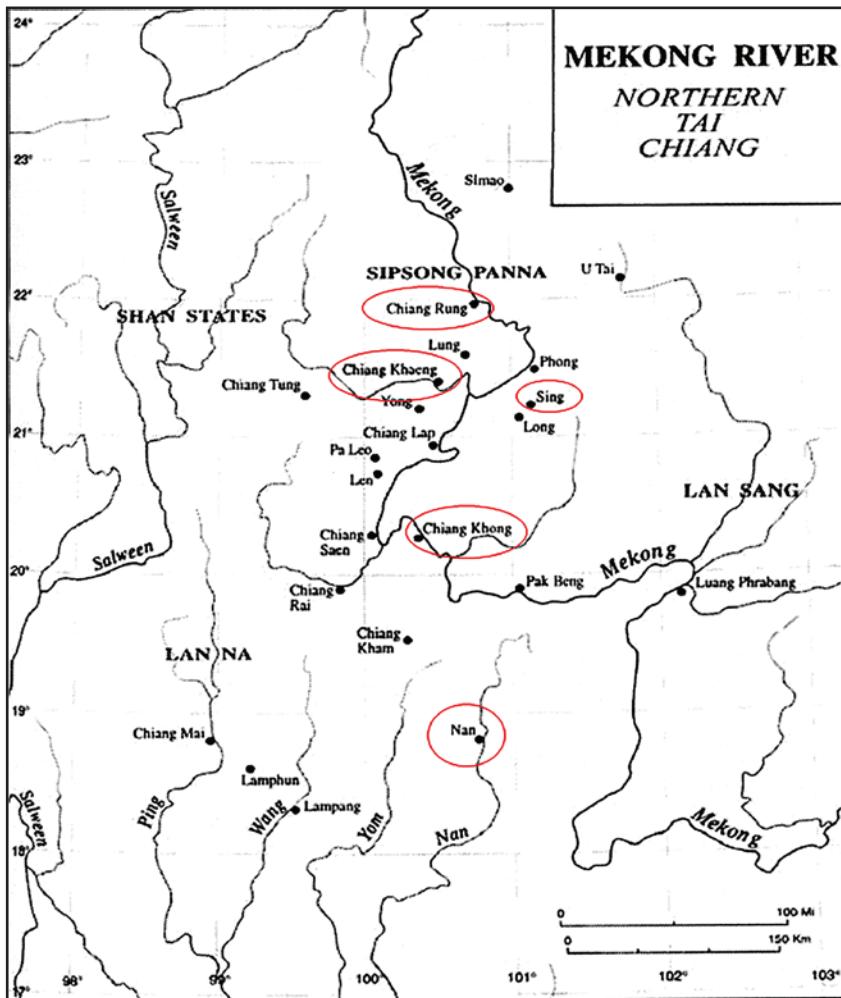


Figure 1 Map of Mekong River with Northern Thai Chiangs.

Nan: a Political Center of Eastern Lan Na

Nan was the ruler of the eastern Lan Na area. The location of Muang Nan made it the buffer zone between Siam and Vietnam.² The city itself was on the bank of the Nan River but its territory extended across the Mekong River to northern Laos and to the south of Sipsong Panna. Big and small towns under Nan's rule were divided into the *chao*'s towns (towns ruled by lesser chiefs or members of the chief's family) and *phaya* and *saenluang*'s towns (towns ruled by nobles).³ Four towns ruled by the *chao* were Chiang Khong on the Mekong River, Muang Thoeng on the Ing and Mekong Rivers, Muang Chiang Kham on the Ing River, and Muang Ngoen on the Ngoen River confluence to Mekong River. These four *muang* were frequently mentioned in the *Tamnan Phuenmuang Chiang Mai* as the supporters of Lan Na for war supply and manpower. There were another forty-one smaller *muang* ruled by the lesser nobles ranked as *phaya* and *saenluang*.⁴

2 In the early Bangkok period, Vietnam was encroaching into the Sipsong Chu Tai, the dependencies of Luang Phrabang. Resulting from the successive warfare Nan gathered the Lue people from the east of the Mekong River and theoretically claimed authority over the area.

3 The administrative ranks of the Lan Na state was called the Chao Khan Ha consisted of Chao Luang, Chao Hona or Upparat, Chao Ratchawong, Chao Ratchabut and Chao Homuangkeo or Chao Burirat. The principal Lan Na states were under the collective leadership of Chao Khan Ha. Many smaller cities ruled by the members of the *chao*'s families were put under the same system.

4 National Archives, R.5 M.58/158 The management of Muang Nan, June 2, r.s 119 - 4 August r.s. 121.

Nan bordered Lan Sang (also spelled Lan Xang) and Sipsong Panna in the north and northeast. Muang Ngeon and Muang Phukha, border towns of Nan, are now in Saiyaburi and Luang Namtha districts of the Democratic Republic of Laos. In the past the relationship between Nan and the Lue and Lao states across the Mekong River was very close. The Mekong River, one of the longest rivers of the world, was not a barrier for these Tai states at all. On the contrary, it tied them together since it provided the best accessibility to the brotherly Tai communities.

From Bangkok, the transportation to Nan was a serious problem due to rugged mountains and dense forests. People traveled by foot on narrow paths or by boats along the Nan River and its tributaries. Traders from Bangkok carried their goods by boats from Bangkok to Tha It and Tha Sao in Muang Phichai, and from there changed to oxen caravans to Nan because the river was obstructed by rapids and thus made it too dangerous to travel. Length of distance and difficulty of transportation were added to diseases like malaria and dysentery. Three *chao luang* of Nan died in Bangkok after long and tiresome journeys (Surasak 2000, 58-59). The location of Nan thus made it the most important frontier protector for Siam and the most inaccessible tributary state that could challenge Bangkok rule.



Figure 2 A Ceremony of Allegiance at Wat Chedi Luang, Chiang Mai.

Tributary Relationship between Siam and Nan

While the Siamese Kings from King Taksin (1767-1782) to King Rama III (1826-1849) imposed harsh policies on the Lao tributary states and moved a large number of people from the east of the Mekong area to the Khorat plateau (Wilson 2009, 271), they were quite flexible with the Lan Na states. Nan willingly became *muang prathetsarat* (tributary state) of Bangkok in the year 1788. The king appointed the *chao nai* (ruling group) of Nan and stopped the conflicts between them. As the suzerain, Bangkok was expected to protect Nan from external threats, namely the Burmese and Vietnamese, and intervene when there were internal conflicts between the various *chao nai*. The triennial duty of Nan as the *muang prathetsarat*

was to send tribute of local products requested by the suzerains. The *chao nai* had to go to Bangkok for official appointment and take part in some important ceremonies there. They had to drink the “water of allegiance” to confirm their loyalty to Bangkok. In time of war, manpower recruitment and supply were demanded. Reluctance or delay could bring them punishment, demotion or even the death penalty. The *chao nai* were allowed to rule their states and to run their expansionist policy with the support of Bangkok. War captives were kept in their states. Most of the time, the *chao nai* would report and present the number of the people they gathered, but Bangkok seldom took them away. The kings always allowed the *chao nai* to keep the people to populate their states. This special relationship later on led to an argument between King Chulalongkorn and Somdet Chaophraya Borom Maha Srisuriyawong, the ex-regent, as to whether the Lan Na states were the *muang Khun* (colonies or dependencies) or *muang sawamiphak* (the allegiance payers) (Ratanaporn 2009, 208). The former wanted to enforce direct rule over those states to cope with the colonial threat, while the latter preferred to allow them full autonomy as a reward for their loyal services and also for fear that they might shift allegiance to other suzerains.

Even though King Chulalongkorn preferred direct rule over the Lan Na tributary states, it took him almost 30 years to carefully incorporate them into Siam proper. As for Nan, French aggression slowed down the

policy of centralization, and the Bangkok court was very cautious about implementing any new policy in Nan. After the Pak Nam incident of 1893 by which France forced Siam to concede her Lao territory on the right bank of the Mekong River, the new French consul tried to build up a good relationship with the Chao Luang of Nan and called him “le Roi” to show the French recognition of his absolute power over his state while ignoring the presence of the Siamese commissioner in Nan.⁵ This policy pushed the Bangkok government to be very friendly and supportive of Nan. The colonial expansion both encouraged and discouraged Bangkok centralization, as in the cases of Chiang Mai, Lamphoon and Lampang when compared to Nan.

The role of Nan as a very efficient tributary state was quite evident in the reign of King Rama III. This was a period of political unrest in the north and east frontier areas, such as the rebellions in Sipsong Panna and the very serious rebellion of Chao Anuwong Wiangchan. Siam viewed Nan an appropriate, reliable and strong protector of her northern territory from Vietnamese encroachment. She also depended on Nan to watch over Luang Phrabang and other Lao states. For Siam, “...Nan has been the most powerful *Muang Lao* of Siam in the north for a long time. The northern Lao tributary states of Siam all recognize and respect Chao Nakhorn Nan...” (Somsak 1986, 1). Nan was assigned to guard the frontier, keep peace and

5 U.K., General Report (Political) of a Journey to Korat and Nan, 1895 by Mr. J. S. Black, F.O. 69 / 162.

stability and, as the Siamese political agent, to persuade the other nearby Tai states to pay allegiance to Bangkok.

Nan had served Siam as an active and loyal vassal until it was incorporated into Siam proper in early twentieth century. They fought against the colonial powers together until the 1890s, when the Bangkok government conceded the Lao tributary states to France. The French aggression drove the Nan *chao nai* closer to Siam, as the British official noticed during his trip to Nan that

...The Chief, who had previously been very independent has since 1893 been much more submissive to Siam through fear of French aggression, and he had later so skillfully been coached by the Siamese Commissioner, Phra Prom Surin, that he now regards the French with the utmost hatred and dread...⁶

Less than ten years later, the Bangkok government again suffered the loss of the west bank of the Mekong River that covered the area opposite of Luang Phrabang in 1904. Muang Sing, the Lue city over which Nan always claimed its authority, and the area on the east bank of the Mekong fell under French rule, while the west bank fell under the British. The two colonial powers allowed Sipsong Panna to be under Chinese rule. The Lao older generation had bitter feelings about

6 U.K., General Report (Political) of a Journey to Korat and Nan: 1895
(by Mr. J. S. Black)

the divisions between the Ban Phi Muang Nong made by the ignorant colonial powers while the Siamese thought bitterly about their “lost territory” (Khampheng 1999, 149). During the Pacific War, with strong support from Japan, Thailand (the new name of Siam) retook Saiyaburi district of Laos, which borders with several provinces of Thailand, namely Chiang Rai, Nan, Uttaradit, Phitsanulok and Loei, and named it Changwat Lan Chang, a new province of Thailand. The Lao people did not fight against the Thai invasion. Some of their soldiers took their arms and came to side of the Thai (Bunchuia 2004, 112-114). Changwat Lan Chang was occupied only for a short period from 1941-1945, but the occupation shows an obsession of Siam over their lost territory to the French. Territorial disputes, the legacy of French rule, sporadically broke out between Thailand and Laos.



Figure 3 Map of Shan States and Sipsong Panna.

Kin Relationship of the Tai states in the Mekong River Basin

The Lao scholar Khamphaeng Thipmuntali proclaims in his article written after his trip to Muang Sing, Luang Namtha district of Laos as follows.

...If we rubbed out the line of demarcation between Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and China and looked at the territory along the Mekong River bank in history we could see the deep relations between the people and rulers of this region... (Khampheng 1999, 150)

The Tai people are familiar with the term *ban phi muang nong* (village of the elder siblings and town of the younger siblings), which reveals the kin politics of Tai states, such as Sipsong Panna, Lan Sang and Lan Na, the principal Tai states in the Mekong River basin. The Tai chronicles always reveal the tradition of kin recognition of the *chao nai* of different states, no matter if they were relatives by blood or not. It has been the Tai manner and practice to recognize the elder and the superior by calling them *phi* (older siblings) or even *pho* (father), as often appeared in the letters sent back and forth by the Tai *chao nai*. The kin connection orientation led to the patronage system in their politics. Historically these states had close relationships, always shared borders and were involved in the other's affairs. They interfered when serious internal disputes occurred

and supported each other when an external enemy attacked. They had the obligation to help each other. They could sometimes give away some border villages or towns to their neighbors to show friendliness or as a dowry when they intermarried.

The Tai traditional chronicles reveal that the Tai states sent tribute to each other. It was a diplomatic tribute system. Sending tribute did not always mean that the sender was under the receiver's suzerainty. There were two kinds of tribute. Among the Tai states, tribute could be just a gift to show *kwam hak kwam paeng* (love and care) sent between two equal states who claimed to be sibling states. The Tai states always sent *bannakan* or tribute as a token of friendliness and respect. In 1556, King Tilokarat sent two elephants carrying some regalia to Chiang Tung to celebrate the coronation of the Chao Fa Chiang Tung, who sent four horses and some valuable gifts in return (Griswold and Prasert 1979, 4-6). Chao Muang La assigned his son to bring a white horse and a pair of ivory tusks to Chao Luang Nan (Saratsawadee 1993, 93). When Nan claimed that Chiang Khaeng had agreed to be Nan's dependency because they sent tribute to Nan, Chao Fa Chiang Khaeng demurred, saying that Chiang Khaeng sent tribute consisting of rhinoceros horn, ivory and a horse just to continue good relationships with the Chao Chiwit (Lord of Life) of Nan, and Nan in return sent him a male elephant. This gift exchange for Chiang Khaeng was a gesture of a good relationship only, and Chiang Khaeng assumed that they could then settle down in Muang Sing without invoking Nan's rivalry. Nan, however, insisted

that Chiang Khaeng could establish itself in Muang Sing only if they accepted the suzerainty of Siam through Nan's advice. (Grabowsky and Renoo 2008, 268-272).

There was another kind of tribute sending that was viewed as a token recognition of superiority sent from the smaller to the more powerful ones. Tai states sent tribute to China regularly ever since the thirteenth century (Sun Lai Chen 2000, 82-83). When Phra Chai Racha led his troop from Ayutthaya to the gates of Chiang Mai, Phranang Chirapraphadevi came out to meet him with *Khreung Bannakan*, by which Ayutthaya assumed that Lan Na was her tributary state (Aroonrat and Wyatt 2000, 113). After the Burmese Bayinaung took control of the Tai states, all of them, in turn, sent tribute to Burma as vassalages. Under Bangkok rule, the Lan Na states sent tribute to Siam and observed the tributary obligation. This practice was a power relationship which could be cancelled at anytime, if the receivers did not or could not play the role of strong and generous patrons.

Tributary relationships were flexible. States located between two or more powerful kingdoms might prefer to send tribute to the rulers of those kingdoms in order to receive recognition of their status and to balance off the power of those powerful neighbors. The double or triple allegiances were well accepted when the suzerains felt that the vassal states were located too far to be put under their sole control and the interest was too little. This type of allegiance was considered more of a matter of prestige than genuine political interest.

Some Tai states sent tribute to more than one sovereign. Sipsong Panna, for example, sent tribute to China and Burma. Thus came the saying *ho pen pho, man pen mae* (China is the father, Burma is the mother). The Lue *chao nai* offered to send tribute to Siam to be *kha sam fai fa* (the vassal of three suzerains) in addition to sending tribute to China and Burma in order to have their captive relatives released from Bangkok and sent back to Chiang Hung.⁷ Chiang Khaeng, a smaller Tai state, earlier sent tribute to Lan Na and Sipsong Panna (Grabowsky and Renoo 2008, 237-238). Later on, it sent tribute to China and Burma, showing that this state was upgrading itself to be equal to Sipsong Panna. The *Praphenee Hiet Kong Chao Fa Srinookham* in the nineteenth century emphasizes the status of Chiang Khaeng as Muang Chiang Khaeng Ho Kham and claims that the Chinese emperor and the Burmese king jointly appointed the chief as Chao Fa Ho Kham, who held the same status as the Chao Fa of Sipsong Panna (Grabowsky and Renoo 2008, 317).

Relationships between Nan and Sipsong Panna in the Nineteenth Century

Early nineteenth century initiated a period of turmoil for the petty Tai states. After the Opium War of 1840, China, weakened by wars, rebellions and political factions, ceased to be the super power of

⁷ National Library, Chotmahet Ratchakan Thi 4, j.s. 1228,
Letter from Muang Nan # 31.

Asia. Southeast Asian kingdoms gradually stopped sending tribute to China, who hardly played any crucial role in regional politics. Burma, formerly the most powerful kingdom of mainland Southeast Asia, was weakened by its political conflicts and Western threats. Without strong suzerains who acted as the arbitrator in settling their disputes, the ruling groups of the Tai states continually fought and thus caused problems for the people, who then fled into the jungle. Succession disputes frequently occurred and reduced the authority of the chiefs. When they could not agree upon who would assume the throne, they normally turned to the external powers to support them and legitimize their rule. In Sipsong Panna, it caused successive warfare among the Lue *chao nai*; each group was supported by either China, Burma, Lan Sang or Siam.

Siam seized this chance to expand her power across the Mekong River to prevent the Burmese and Vietnamese invasions and to gain more manpower. This policy was coincidental with the Lan Na *chao nai*'s expansionism to gather manpower from the nearby petty states. The Siamese northward expansionist policy started with the reign of King Rama I, who ordered the *chao nai* of Chiang Mai, Phrae, Nan, Lamphoon, Lampang and Thoen to attack Chiang Khaeng, Muang Yawng, Chiang Hung and Muang Lem, which were the principal muang of the Shan states and included the capital of Sipsong Panna. Siam was afraid that Burma would use these states as supporters in time of war. A very good example occurred during the Burmese rule when the Burmese governor ordered the Chao Fa of Chiang

Khaeng to bring to Chiang Saen 215 buffalos to farm the rice fields to feed the soldiers there (Grabowsky and Renoo 2008, 256).

Political conflicts frequently occurred among the small Lue states that allowed Nan to encroach into Sipsong Panna as an agent of Siam. In the year 1804, Nan attacked Chiang Khaeng, Chiang Hung and other cities of Sipsong Panna. The Nan chronicle says that the Lue *chao nai* accepted Siamese suzerainty. Some *chao nai* and *thao khun* (nobles and officials), including the uncle of Chao Fa of Chiang Hung, Chao Muang Chiang Khaeng and a son of Chao Muang Phukha, went to Bangkok to present tribute to King Rama I, who in return gave them valuable gifts.⁸ It was Nan's goal to rule principal Lue cities on eastern bank of the Mekong River, such as Muang Sing and Chiang Khaeng. Their strategic importance could support Nan's expansion into Sipsong Panna. The location of Chiang Khaeng close to the Mekong River made it accessible to other Tai principal states and cities, such as Chiang Saen, Chiang Tung, Chiang Hung and Muang Hun. Muang Sing covered a big area of rice cultivation that could support an army sent to Sipsong Panna. Attacking Chiang Khaeng in the year 1813, Nan took Chao Fa Chiang Khaeng and the people of Chiang Khaeng and Muang Luang Phukha to Nan. Chao Fa Chiang Khaeng stayed in Nan until his death ten years later. To maintain Nan's authority over Chiang Khaeng, which covered the area of left bank of the Mekong River up to Sipsong Panna, Chao Luang of Nan acted

8 “Ratchawongpakon Phongsawadan Muang Nan”, in *Prachum Phongsawadan Chabab Kanchanaphisak Lem 7*, Ibid, pp.297-298.

as a Siamese agent, taking Chao Fa Chiang Khaeng's son to Bangkok to receive an appointment as Chao Fa of Chiang Khaeng (Grabowsky and Renoo 2008, 249-251). Nan kept actively engaged in the battles with the Lue petty states along the Mekong River. Frequent orders were sent from the Bangkok court to the Chao Luang and *chao nai* of Muang Nan to run periodic checks on affairs in Sipsong Panna and Chiang Tung and report to Bangkok regularly.⁹

As Nan and Luang Phrabang were located directly opposite each other on the Mekong River, the Bangkok government wanted Nan and Luang Phrabang to cooperatively expand Siamese power into Sipsong Panna (Somsak 1986, 24). A letter from Bangkok encouraged the *chao nai* of Nan and Luang Phrabang to

...serve the king by promptly sending troops to gather the people of Muang La, Muang Phong and Sipsong Panna to fully fill the villages and cities to be the outer wall to provide prestige. Also the king ordered Muang Luang Phrabang to prepare an army and send the high nobles to consult with Phraya Nan, not to compete, but to be united to serve the king...¹⁰

Constance Wilson pointed out that Luang Phrabang, a major administrative center of Siam in northern Laos had a crucial role in

9 National Library, Chotmai Het of the forth reign, chulasakkarat 1228, the Report from Nan.

10 The National Library, # 51, Chotmaihet Ratchakan Thi 3, j.s 1210.

keeping the frontier situation in a state of peace and stability. On the west, Luang Phrabang cooperated with Chiang Mai and Nan to watch over Sipsong Panna, but its primary responsibility was to keep watch on Sipsong Chu Tai. She noted that during the third reign, joint missions to Bangkok of the *chao nai* of Luang Phrabang and Lan Na were very common (Wilson 2009, 285-286).

Lan Na and Sipsong Panna shared many cultural distinctions. Theravada Buddhism practiced in Sipsong Panna came from Lan Na. The scripts used there are the same as *tua tham* of Lan Na. Siam called the Lan Na people “Lao Phung Dam” (the black belly Lao) because the people had the custom of tattooing the male body from the waist to the knees, making their bodies black. Lan Na and the Lue of Sipsong Panna shared this distinctive body painting and thus confirmed their cultural relationship. There were long lasting relationship between the ruling and the ruled of the two states, since the King Lao Meng of Chiang Saen married Nang Thep Kham Khai of Chiang Hung. Nan took advantage of its location at the northern and eastern border of the Lan Na states and the traditional relationship with Sipsong Panna to expand its power across the Mekong River to the Lue states.

Intermarriage between the *chao nai* of Nan and the Lue states and the trade interaction between the people were evident. A Nan ruler married a daughter of Chao Fa Chiang Khaeng. Their son, Chao Anantayot, a very well known Chao Luang of Nan, married the

daughters of Chao Muang Chiang Khong, Chiang Lom and Chiang Saen, the principal frontier towns along the Mekong River.¹¹ Muang Huaisai, Bo Ten, Muang Sing, Luang Namtha, Muang Luang, Muang Meong and Wieng Phukha, Lue cities of northern Laos opposite of Chiang Khong, had close tie with Nan politically and economically. In Muang Luang Namtha now there are six villages whose people are called Yuan-Kalom, meaning the Lan Na people from the south. These people, led by the *chao nai* of Nan, moved from Chiang Saen to Muang Namtha.¹² They, however, weave their tube skirts in the style of the Lue in Muang Ngeon, a tiny border town of Nan before 1904.

Trade interaction linked Nan with the Lue cities. Northern Laos had limited cultivated land due to rugged mountains; people often faced shortages of rice and thus depended on rice from Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong. Bunchuia mentioned rice transportation on rafts and boats along the Mekong River until after World War II (Bunchuia 2004, 17). The main exporting products of this area were salt from many salt wells in Muang U Nua and U Tai, the Lue cities which were a *panna* (a Lue administrative units consisting of many *muang*) on the east of the Mekong. Beside opium which was grown in Phongsali, there was an opium trade route from China, northern Vietnam and Phongsali to Chiang Tung, Lan Na, Luang Phrabang and Viengtiane (Bunchuia 2004, 61-63). To rule this area means that one could monopolize trade in salt, opium and rice.

11 Phongsawadarn Muang Nan, p.279.

12 Interviewd Mr.Boonsong Keomaneewong, Luang Namtha district, Laos, February 16, 2011.

Politics across the Mekong River was played by small centers, which were *muang song fai fa* and their suzerains. They always competed with each other for political and economic interest. Siamese *prathetsarat* like Nan and Luang Phrabang joined hands with their suzerain to expand their territory for mutual interest. Nan was much concerned with affairs in Sipsong Panna. When he heard of the fighting between the Lue *chao nai*, Chao Luang of Nan sent Phra Manoracha and Nan troops to Muang Luang Phukha and contacted Chao Mahachai of Muang Phong to offer help, which meant interference in the internal affairs of the Lue. The latter sent a horse, a white mule, four carpets and four red rugs as a token of respect to Chao Luang of Nan. A year later, Phraya Sri Song Muang of Nan took troops to Muang Luang Phukha again and asked to have the people from Chiang Khaeng and Chiang Rai who were moved to Sipsong Panna come back to Nan. Moreover, he insisted that Chao Mahachai arrange tribute to send to Nan to be furthered to Bangkok. Mahachai asked to perform a formal oath of friendship by which

...Mahachai had Phraya Sri Song Muang find buffaloes to sacrifice. One for each side and exchange half of the offerings. Then, they erected a spirit house to worship the guardian spirits. They invited the spirits of Muang Nan and Muang Sipsong Panna to witness. If a muang cheated the other, let it be disastrous. The oath took place at Muang Luang Phukha... (Bunchuia 2004, 73)



Figure 4 King Rama III

King Rama III was very much concerned about the political situation in this area. Conflicts and suspicion between Siam and Vietnam drove the Bangkok government to expand its power to Laos and Sipsong Panna. The case where Chao Anuwong fled to take refuge in Hue alerted Bangkok to Vietnamese influence in Laos. Bangkok was worried about Vietnamese encroachment into Cambodia and was afraid that it would capture the Tai states of Sipsong Chu Tai, which were under Luang Phrabang rule. To strengthen the northern frontier would be the best strategy. Nan and other frontier states were then

assigned to spy in the area and report to Bangkok regularly. Whenever there were chances to persuade petty Tai states to accept Bangkok suzerainty, they should take prompt action. If they succeeded, they should send some of their ruling groups and tribute to Bangkok right away. The Bangkok government aimed at weakening the Burmese army and stopping their expansion in the northern frontier. Muang La and Muang Phong of Sipsong Panna had been the best suppliers for the Burmese when they needed war provisions. Political unrest and succession disputes in Sipsong Panna provided Bangkok with a chance to take over Sispong Panna, at first by persuading the Lue *chao nai* to pay allegiance to Bangkok. If the Lue did not accommodate, he was determined to make war.¹³ It was the Bangkok policy to take away as many people as possible and leave the cities empty and useless for their enemy's troops. This policy however upset the defeated people and made them run away into the jungle when the Siamese troop entered their homeland (Evans 2006, 38).

In the early Bangkok period, Siam was mostly concerned with Burmese and Vietnamese invasions, but later on, she became worried about the Western colonial powers who were taking over parts of Burma and Indochina. On his dying bed, King Rama III warned the Siamese officials, “There will be no more wars with the Burmese and Vietnamese, only with the *farang* (Westerners) whom you must beware of so as not to lose advantages. Their good things, we should learn from and follow but not be too much dependent...” (Chao

13 National Library, Chotmaihet R.3, # 48, j.s. 1210.

Phraya Thipphakorawong Mahakosathibbodi 1995, 152). The demand of the *farang* to have an exact borderline drove Siam to strongly establish her power over the overlapping frontier towns that used to switch allegiance between Burmese and Lan Na. Nan was assigned to push this policy into action and was willing to be the Siamese agent to govern the petty states on the Mekong River.

To be the leader of the Tai states on the east bank of the Mekong, however, Nan must gain recognition from all three states—Chiang Tung, Chiang Rung and Chiang Khaeng—since these states were closely tied politically. (Grabowsky and Renoo 2008, 284). Chiang Tung invasions in the 1850s, if successful, would benefit Nan more than other Lan Na states. Nan would be strongly positioned to rule the Lue cities in the north of Laos, which were the satellites of Sipsong Panna, such as Muang Sing, Luang Namtha, Muang Mang, Muang Nang, Muang Luang and Wieng Phukha.



Figure 5 The Hoa Kham Luang at Chiang Tung.

Nan and the Chiang Tung Invasions of 1850's

The first Chiang Tung invasion occurred in 1850 during the reign of King Rama III. The rulers of Chiang Mai and Nan were Chao Luang Phutthawong and Chao Luang Ananthaworariththidet, respectively. Luang Phrabang, Chiang Mai and Nan sent reports to Bangkok that there were riots in Chiang Hung, the capital of Sipsong Panna due to the succession disputes of the Lue *chao nai*. (Chaophraya Thiphakorawong 1995, 134-136). After sending people to inquire about the incident in Sipsong Panna, the Chao Muang Luang Phrabang received a letter from Chao Saenwi Fa of Chiang Hung informing him that in the year 1847 there were riots in Sispong Panna, but now things were under control. The Chao Saenwi Fa emphasized that it was an internal conflict and no external enemy invaded; so he did not yet need help from Luang Phrabang. He also mentioned the traditional alliance and an agreement to support each other in time of wars which might be caused by an external enemy. But a year later, rebellions occurred all over Sipsong Panna against the Chao Saenwi Fa, who then with his family, took refuge in Luang Phrabang, who reported to Bangkok and received orders to send the whole group to Bangkok, as was customary for a dependency.¹⁴

King Rama III saw the chance to extend Bangkok's influence to Sipsong Panna but viewed that it was very necessary to seize Chiang Tung in order to take over Sipsong Panna. According to him

14 The royal letter of the Chao Saenwi Fa to the Chao Muang of Luang Phrabang. In *Phraratcha Phongsawadan Krung Ratanakosin Ratchakan Thi 3* (The Royal Chronicle of Krung Ratanakosin, the Third Reign).

...Burmese have power in Chiang Rung because they rely on Chiang Tung, which is located next to Sipsong Panna on the west. Similarly, the Burmese relied on Chiang Mai to extend their power over to Luang Phrabang and Vientiane in the past. If they cannot depend on Chiang Tung, they would release Chiang Rung and Sipsong Panna, just like they released Muang Luang Phrabang and Vientiane to Thai because we already took Muang Chiang Mai...

(Prachum Phongsawadan Chabab Kanjanaphisek Lem 11 2008, 529)

As a great monarch who had fought many wars with the Burmese to protect his country, if he did not get involved in Sipsong Panna's affairs, it could mean that Rama III was afraid of the Burmese. The king probably was concerned with both his prestige and Siam's political interest. He was a very great visionary. With his experience, he viewed the benefit from the vantage point of the political geography of Lan Na states. He could see that their locations were an advantage if they were set up as smaller political centers for expanding Siamese power into the Shan States, dependencies of Burma. Chiang Tung was the main target. It could be a political center and frontier defender, if it became *prathetsarat* of Siam. Siam could feel relieved on the western frontier, while on the eastern frontier, Nan could keep the Lue dependencies from north of Laos to south of Sipsong Panna under its control. Beside Nan, Luang Phrabang was another agent to

rule over the Lue area.¹⁵ The Chiang Tung invasion thus was a plan to establish a political power base to expand Siamese territory as far as possible and to control the frontiers efficiently.

It was evident that the Siamese strongly recognized the importance of Chiang Tung. Thirty years later, Krommamun Phichitpreechakorn, the Siamese commissioner in Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphoon reported to King Chulalongkorn in 1884, “Regarding Chiang Tung, it is most unfortunate. Chiang Tung lies nearer to us than Burma, is well-watered and as rich in rice as Tak. This is a good opportunity because Burma cannot help anyone. If we take Chiang Tung, we can get four and five later (getting more cities under Bangkok suzerainty)...”¹⁶

King Rama III then ordered Muang Chiang Mai, Lamphoon and Lampang to attack Chiang Tung in the year 1849 (Chaophraya Thiphakorawong 1995, 137). The reason that Nan did not engage in the first invasion because King Rama III saw that the *chao nai* of Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphoon were familiar with the Chiang Tung area. Moreover, they had a close relationship with the former *chao nai* of Chiang Tung; some of them moved to live in Chiang Mai (Ratanaporn 1988, 308-309).

15 Luang Phrabang oversaw the northern frontier border to Sipsong Panna. The *chao nai* persuaded the Lue to pay allegiance to Siam. They also sent their troop and supply to support the Chiang Tung invasions. Surasak Srisam-ang. *Lamdaab Kasat Laos*. (Bangkok: Samnakngan Borankhadee lae Phiphitthaphanthasathan Hae Chat Thi 8, Ubonratchathanee, 2000), p.226.

16 National Archives, R.5, M. 58 / 88 Report of Krommamun Phichitpreechakorn about organizing the government in Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang, 1884.

Lan Na troops failed to take Chiang Tung. They blamed it on the conflicts and competition of the Chiang Mai *chao nai*. Chao Luang volunteered to attack Chiang Tung again in the dry season but the plan was deferred because King Rama III died in 1849. As his successor, King Mongkut inherited the Chiang Tung invasion, although he was not very enthusiastic about making war. He believed as did most of the Siamese nobles, that when a smaller state appealed for help from a larger one, the latter was obliged to help (*Prachum Phongsawadan Chabab Kanjanaphisek Lem* 7 2002, 568). This time he decided to make it a real war operated by the Siamese. It was the last traditional war Siam made. He appointed his brother, Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit to be the chief commander of the army, leading about 30,000 soldiers from many inner cities and the tributary states to attack Chiang Tung. The army was very well equipped with 449 elephants, 152 horses, 400 guns and nine pieces of heavy and medium-weight artillery (Chotmaihet Ruang Thap Chiang Tung 1913, 103). The second invasion in 1852 failed as did a subsequent one in 1854. The problems were political as well as geographic.

The second and third Chiang Tung invasions were not well received by the western Lan Na *chao nai* (*chao nai* of Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Lamphoon). They did not, however, refuse to join or support the army because it was their obligation to do so, but they, nevertheless, showed their sentiments by repeatedly complaining about food

shortages due to the crop failure. It was evident that the *chao nai* of Chiang Mai were unwilling to make war with Chiang Tung. They displayed no signs of enthusiastic cooperation. Krommaluang Wongsâ's forces were caught off guard by a small Khoen force who dressed in red like the Chiang Mai troops and spoke a similar dialect. The Chiang Tung force infiltrated and attacked the Siamese, who mistakenly believed that the raiders were allies from Chiang Mai. This serious mistake would not have happened had the Chiang Mai *chao nai* been positioned at various points in the attack force. Chiang Mai was slow in raising troops and thus allowed time for Chiang Tung to prepare their defense and to get help from Muang Nai and Saenwi, the Tai states under Burmese rule (Ratanaporn 1988, 312-315). Siamese officials found that Chiang Mai units avoided service in the vanguard, moving back to serve in less beneficial ways, drained resources and supplies of the invasion forces, and fought in a cowardly, uncooperative manner.¹⁷

Chiang Tung was located on the high ground surrounded by many hills. The city was well protected with high wall and deep moat. It was difficult to carry provisions for large forces that must travel for months on end. The forces all encountered difficulties in traveling over unfamiliar terrain made more troublesome by the need to carry heavy stores of ammunition and weapons. Movements consequently fell behind schedule.

17 National Library, Chotmahet Ratchakan Thi 4, j.s 1214 # 33, Report to Phraya Siharatcharitthikrai.

During the 1854 invasion, Siamese troops attacked Chiang Tung for 21 days almost by themselves because the Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphoon armies failed to fully fight. Their excuse was the same: shortage of food, supplies, and ordnance. Krommaluang Wongsa had no choice but to retreat because many troops fell sick, and heavy rains started. Both sides blamed each other for the failure. The Siamese officials reported to Bangkok that the *chao nai* of Chiang Mai did not act in earnest and disobeyed the Chief Commander, Krommaluang Wongsa. They emphasized their own interest, gathering the people from Muang Pu and Muang Sat and sending them back home. The *chao nai* of Chiang Mai protested that Chao Phraya Yommarat undermined the dignity of the Chiang Mai *chao nai* by using rude words and whipping a high ranking Chiang Mai official for delaying in sending guns, bullets and gunpowder.¹⁸

In spite of the failure and amid the suspicion on the *chao nai*'s loyalty to Bangkok, King Monkut promoted Chao Luang of Chiang Mai to be Phrachao Nakorn Chiang Mai. It was in his reign that the ruling groups of the principal Lan Na states were conferred the new rank from *phraya* to *chao* (Prachakitkorachak 1972, 492-493). The *chao khan ha* of Lan Na states consisted of Chao Luang, Chao Ho Na or Chao Upparat, Chao Ratchawong, Chao Ratchabut and Chao Ho Muangkeo or Chao Burirat. Bangkok's friendly measures proved that loyalty of the Lan Na States was needed, and these states were strategically important to Siam.

18 National Library, Chotmaihet Ratchakan Thi 4, j.s.1216, #70 The letter from Phraya Siharatriththikrai.

In contrast to the role played by Chiang Mai, Nan proved to be very reliable during the two invasions led by Krommaluang Wongsa. The royal army under Krommaluang Wongsa headed to Nan and was accompanied by the Nan *chao nai*. The Chao Luang of Nan during these invasions was Chao Anantaworariththidet (1825-1894). The *Ratchawongpakorn Phongsawadan Muang Nan* mentions the royal letter from Bangkok ordering Nan to take its force to Chiang Hung, while the Siamese troop together with the troops from Chiang Mai, Lamphoon, and Lampang were on the way to attack Chiang Tung in 1853. Encountering the Nan troops, the Lue *chao nai* promptly agreed to pay allegiance to Bangkok. The Chao Luang of Nan had the Chao Upparat of Chiang Hung lead his troop to support the Siamese in attacking Chiang Tung. However, Krommaluang Wongsa retreated before the Uparat arrived at Chiang Tung (*Prachum Phongsawadan Chabab Kanjanaphisek Lem 7* 2002, 313-314). Although Nan did not take a leading role in attacking Chiang Tung, it served as a good supporter for the Siamese army. Krommaluang Wongsa led his army to Phitsanulok, Uttaradit, Nan and Chiang Khong to meet with other troops at Chiang Saen, implying that he trusted the Nan *chao nai*. When he retreated, his army was guarded by the Nan troop until they arrived at Muang Nan safely.¹⁹

19 For more detail, please see Ratanaporn Sethakul, “Chiang Tung War: the Opening of the War at the Northernmost of Siam in the Reign of Phrabat Somdet Phra Chomkla Chaoyuhua,” *Suk Chiang Tung (Chiang Tung Wars)*. (Bangkok: Prachachon, 2009), pp.116-162.

While Chiang Mai and other Lan Na states failed to capture Chiang Tung for whatever reason, Nan successfully seized Chiang Hung and brought Sipsong Panna under Siamese suzerainty, though only for a short period and quite theoretically. We can see that Nan was more motivated to make these wars than other Lan Na states because its success could easily help expand its power to Sipsong Panna and thus strengthen its northern frontier. The capture of Chiang Tung would make Nan the strongest political center overseeing the Lue area on the east of the Mekong in such places as Muang Sing, Chiang Khaeng and other satellites that used to be under Chiang Tung's power or had close relationships with Chiang Tung. To govern Chiang Khaeng, Nan and Siam needed to take over Chiang Tung and Chiang Hung. The letter of Chao Fa Chiang Khaeng sent to Chao Luang Nan when he was half-forced and half-persuaded to send tribute to Bangkok said that

...to have Chiang Khaeng send tribute including the silver and golden flowers (to Bangkok) this time is not possible because Muang Chiang Rung, Chiang Tung and Muang Chiang Khaeng are like the three kon sao (the three stones set together to make a stove); (we) help each other and plan together...Chao Muang Nan should take over Chiang Tung first. If you had Chiang Tung (under you), Chiang Khaeng is like a fish in your basket or the wax in your hand...²⁰

20 National Archives, R.5 M.2.12 K/2 Report from Muang Nan, May 5, r.s. 108.

The Lue of Muang Nan

It was not only power over Lue territory that Nan wanted. A large number of the Lue people who moved from Sipsong Panna to settle in Nan were very valuable demographically. Nan suffered from a shortage of manpower during the political turmoil and successive wars in late eighteenth century. It was the prey of Vietnam and Laos, who invaded and took away its people.²¹ *Phongsawadan Muang Nan* described the situation as, “At that time the Lan Na Thai muang were not stable, and Muang Nan was abandoned and had no *thao phaya* (ruling group)...”²² In the period of restoration, which is often called *samai kab phak sai sa, khab kha sai muang* (the period of putting vegetables into the basket, putting people into towns), Nan made wars, as well as applying the friendly method of persuasion to move people from the petty Tai states to Nan. Due to the political unrest in Sipsong Panna, as well as the Burmese suppression of Muang Yawng and Chiang Khong in the 1790s, 585 Yawng families took refuge in Nan, and Chao Muang Chiang Khong took a large number of his people to Nan. Even after Nan was restored, the *chao nai* still fought very hard to collect more people to fill the abandoned area of Nan.

21 *Phongsawadan Muang Nan*, p.275.

22 *Phongsawadan Muang Nan*, p.286.

Moving people from the northern Tai petty states to fill the lands of Nan by force or by persuasion was the priority task of the Nan rulers. Many groups of people often came to seek refuge in Nan during political turmoil or famine. This made Nan a multi-ethnic society, with the Lue and Yuan as the major groups. On his trip to Nan, a British official found about 3,000-4,000 Lue people who had moved from Muang Phong and Muang La in the year 1848 and settled at Chiang Kham in the valley of the Mae Ing, which empties into the Mekong in the northeastern part of Nan. There were about 1,000 Lue from Muang U who were living partly in the area of Mae Ing River and partly in Chiang Khong. Interestingly, he mentioned that these people were a fighting tribe and had been employed by the Chief of Nan in military expeditions. They were, in consequence, exempted for any other government service taxation.²³

As Siam always insisted on the policy of gathering manpower into its territory, all Lan Na states were encouraged to make wars or to persuade the Tai speaking peoples living out of their borders to come to live inside their states. Persuasion seems to be preferable and fits the critical situation in those petty states that were facing political unrest and suppression from their suzerains. Those people were invited to enter Siamese territory. They received a promise that

23 U.K., General Report (Political) of a Journey to Korat and Nan, 1895 by Mr. J. S. Black, F.O. 69 / 162.

...whatever trouble you have, no water for drinking, no land to farm, no one for overseeing you, turning to His Majesty (the Siamese king) at any time would not be without benefit. You would not be excluded. Gardens, fields, and forests in our home country exist in plentitude; There is water for drinking, land for living, and tranquility for all the Tai Yai (the Shan), Thai Noi (Siamese) and all Tai peoples. There will never be insufficient space...²⁴

Nan followed the policy of *kab phak sai sa, khab kha sai muang* and had a large number of Lue people now living in Nan province. Besides war causing people to move into Nan, close relationships between Nan and Sipsong Panna and the Lue satellites encouraged the willing movement of people up until World War II. There are now about 60 Lue villages that moved from Sipsong Panna and Laos, crossing the Mekong River to settle down in Nan. These villagers identify themselves as Lue and can trace their origins back to their ancestors' hometowns as is shown in the table below (Ratanaporn 1995).

24 National Archives, R. 5, M. 2.12 K / , Copy of letter from Phraya Ratchasamparakon to Muang Chiang Tung.

Districts	Sub-districts	Villages	Origins
Tha Wangpha	Pa Kha	Ban Ton Hang	Muang La
		Ban Nong Bua	Muang La
		Ban Donmoon	Muang La
		Ban Seo	Muang La
		Ban Lomklang	-
		Ban Tungkhong	Chiang Lap
		Ban Nong	Chiang Yod
		Ban Yu	Chiang Lap
		Ban Thon	Muang Yu
	Saen Thong	Ban Hae	Muang Ngob
		Ban Houk	Muang Phuan
		Ban Nakhom	-
		Ban Hua Tong	-
		Ban Donchai	Chiang Saen
		Ban Thongrattana	Muang Yawng
		Ban Patong	Chiang Lom Chiang Len
		Ban Thong	Muang Yawng
		Sri Bunrueng	Muang Yawng
Pua	Silalaeng	Ban Donmoon	Muang Len via
		Ban Donkeo	Chiang Rai
		Ban Donchai	and Phayao
		Ban Tintok	-
		Ban Hia	Ban Rong
			Muang Yawng Muang
			Ngeon Chiang Rung
			Chiang Rung
			Muang Ngeon
			Muang Len
			Muang Phuan

Districts	Sub-districts	Villages	Origins
Pua	Silalaeng	Ban Sala	-
		Ban Huanam	Muang Yawng
		Ban Fai	Chiang Muan
		Ban Huadoi	Chiang Rung, Muang Phuan
			Muang Yawng Chiang
	Sathan Pua		Muang Chiang Rung
		Ban Napan	Muang Phuan
		Ban Santisuk	Muang Len
		Ban Donkeo	Muang Yawng
		Ban Prang	Chiang Lap
Chiang Klang	Phraphutthabat	Ban Khon	Chiang Ngeon
		Ban Palan	Chiang Tung La
		Ban Mon	Muang Yawng Muang
		Ban Rong-nge	Phuan
		Ban Ket	Muang Yawng
	Puea Chiang Klang	Ban Tid	Muang Muang
		Ban Lao	Phuan Muang
		Ban Oo	Phuan Muang Khon
		Ban Nongdaeng	Muang len Maung
			Yawng

Districts	Sub-districts	Villages	Origins
Thung Chang	Ngob	Ban Chiang Khom Ban Sri-udom Ban Ngiu Ban Ngobsala Ban Ngobnue Ban Ngobtai Ban Ngobklang Ban Thongsun	Chiang Khaeng Muang Yawng Chiang Saen Muang Len Luang Phrabang Chiang Lom Muang Len Chiang Hung Chiang Lom Muang Ngoen Muang Luang Muang Yawng "" "
	Pon	Ban Laithong Ban Mai Ban Huai Kon Ban Nawoa Ban Luang Ban Chai Ban Huaisakaeng Ban Muang Ngoen	" " " " "- "- "- "-
	Phae	Ban Huaiteui Ban Sali	- "-
Muan	Duphong	-	-
Ban Luang		-	-
Mae Charim	-	-	-
Santisuk	Pa Leoluang	Ban Sobyang	Muang Yawng

The Lue people lived peacefully and were assimilated into Nan society very well. They shared a similar culture and found no conflicts between the Yuan rulers and the Lue subjects. A long historical relationship and the scarcity of manpower made the Nan *chao nai* compromise with the Lue (Ratanaporn 2000, 323). The *na sak ton dok* system (the rank of the ruling group of Nan) included the Chao Muang of Muang Len (a small town in Chiang Tung), Chao Muang Chiang Khaeng and his associates, Chao Muang Phukha and his associates, Chao Muang Luang and his associates, Chao Muang Chiang Lap and Chao Muang La (Sarasawadee 1993, 84). Including these Lue ruling groups in the ranking system of Nan was meant to dignify and to please them by making them equal to Nan *chao nai*. This list also confirms that Nan had ruled these cities and towns on the east bank of the Mekong River, and that its territory extended across the Mekong River to the northern part, the overlapping area of Sipsong Panna and Lan Sang. It is curious that this *na sak ton dok* system described in *Anakchak Lakkham*, the Law of Nan, written during the period of Phrachao Suriyaphongpharitdate (1893-1918), the Chao Luang of Nan, who encountered both Bangkok centralization efforts and Western colonialism, was a response to general external threats. This law may have been written to show the reform initiative of the Nan administration, as well as to confirm Nan authority over the Tai states on the Mekong River.



Figure 6 Phrachao Suriyaphongpharitdate (1893-1918) Chao Luang of Nan.

Conclusion

...If we rubbed out the line of demarcation between Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and China and looked at the territory along the Mekong River bank in history we could see the deep relations between the people and rulers of this region... (Khampheng 1999, 150)

I quote Khampheng Thipmuntali again to confirm that politics across the Mekong River in the nineteenth century was carried out by kin

relationships of the Tai speaking peoples living along this river. Nan expansion into the Lue areas south of Sipsong Panna was facilitated by their historical relationship as *ban phi muang nong*. While the relationship between the Tai states in the upper Mekong River was a kin-like one, the relationship between these Tai states (Sispong Pan Na, Sipsong Chu Tai, Lan Na and Lan Sang) and other superior kingdoms, was power-oriented under a tributary system. Under the tributary system, politics here had layers. Interaction between the *ban phi muang nong* was friendly and supportive. The one between the suzerains and the *prathetsarat* could be strict and demanding, like the one between Siam and Laos (as in Dr. Constance Wilson's study of Laos) or more flexible and compromising, like the one between Siam and Lan Na states. For the latter, common interest must be mutual, as was obviously seen in the case of the Chiang Tung invasions.

One of the main reasons that Siam started the invasions into Chiang Tung in the 1850s and later on when Nan attempted to force Chiang Khaeng to be under Siamese suzerainty was to extend its power to Sipsong Panna and other Tai states and to easily rule the east bank of the Mekong. However to reach that goal, Chiang Tung and other small Tai states nearby had to be taken under Siam's control because these states had been under the same tributary system of being *muang song fai fa* or *muang sam fai fa* of China, Burma and Vietnam. Nan was willingly supporting Siam's expansionist policy, becoming the Siamese agent in establishing her suzerainty over this area.

Interest and benefit must be shared. What would Nan receive from her assignment? A large number of people living in Nan in the nineteenth century were the Lue immigrants. Nan could not part from them. The trade interaction across the Mekong River was also Nan's concern. Siamese military strength could make Nan influence seem strong as the agent of a super power. In addition, maintaining the prestige of the *chao nai* of Nan could win their loyalty. King Chulalongkorn's appointed Chao Suriyaphongpharitdet to be Phrachao Nan in 1903 before he conceded the Lue towns on the east bank of the Mekong River that used to be under Nan's rule to the French. The highest status of the ruler of the prathesarat given to him could be a consolation as well as an encouragement for the new and the last *phrachao prathetsarat* to watch over the northern frontier.

The coming of the colonial powers stopped Siam from strongly establishing her power over the Mekong River basin by their grasping it from Siam's plate. Traditional politics was gradually transformed to meet the new threats. China, Burma, Siam and Vietnam could no more practice traditional ways of dealing with their tributary states. The so-called *muang song fai fa* or *muang sam fai fa* revealing the political culture of the double or triple allegiance of tributary states had come to an end. When the Western powers arrived, they wanted to mark the exact boundaries of their colonies, and thus forced Siam, the only independent country in mainland Southeast Asia to enforce her sovereignty over her tributary states, to adapt to

a changing reality. The case of Lan Na centralization efforts is a very good illustration that shows how Western imperialism encouraged or even strongly supported the Bangkok government's plan to centralize their authority in the Lan Na states (Ramsay 1971, 23). If anyone defines the Bangkok centralization scheme as internal colonialism, it was certainly internal colonialism influenced and supported by external Western colonialism.

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Interview

Interviewed Mr.Boonsong Keomaneewong, Luang Namtha district, Laos, February 16, 2011.
