

THE TAI AND THE TAI KINGDOMS

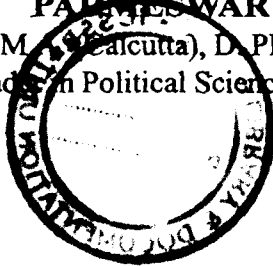
WITH A FULLER TREATMENT OF THE TAI-AHOM
KINGDOM IN THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY

By

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CHAPTER I

THE TAI : THEIR ORIGIN AND BRANCHES

The 'Tai' is a generic name denoting a great branch of the Mongoloid population of Asia. The Tai are now mainly concentrated in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The present habitat of the Tai people extends from Assam in the west to Kwangsi and Hainan in the east and from the interior of Yün-nān in the north to the southernmost extremity of Thailand (Siam) in the south.

Wherever they have spread the Tai have acquired local appellations. In the four major areas of East Asia, namely, Burma, Thailand (Siam), French Indo-China and Yün-nān they are known respectively as the Shan, Siamese, Lao and Pai. The Tai groups and sub-groups in this vast region are known by innumerable other local names which, at times, tend to obscure their racial identity. There are many instances of the same groups being named differently by different peoples and at different historical periods. But the members of this great race, to whatever local groups they may belong, call themselves Tai.

Only in southern and central Siam the aspirated form 'Thai' ('free') is used. 'Chai', a variant of 'Tai', is prevalent among the Laos. The local peoples generally know the Tai by their local names. The Assam branch of the Tai, for instance, that ruled for about six hundred years (A.D. 1228-1826) in the Brahmaputra Valley, is known by its local name 'Ahom'. The other smaller groups of Tai people that came to Assam during a later period are known by their various local names, such as the Hkamti, the Hpaké or Phakeal as the Assamese-speaking people call them, the Turong (or Tai-rung), the Sham, the Iton or Itonia, the Hkamyang and the Norā.¹ But when asked for their racial identity they introduce

1. These people are called Norā only by the local Assamese-Speaking people. The Norās are called by the Tai 'Mān-Nām' (*mān*, village, *nām*, waters, river), meaning lowland or river-side dwellers. Another section is called 'Mān-Noi' (*noi*, highland) meaning highland dwellers.

themselves as Tai-Hkamti, Tai-Hpaké, Tai-Turong and so on. Unlike the Hinduised Ahom these later immigrants still preserve their racial habits and customs. They are to-day mostly scattered in the backward areas of Eastern Assam. They are almost all Buddhists.

Sir George Scott, a well-known authority on the Shans, gives an exhaustive list of Tai communities as known by their local names.^{1a} He also points out that "the branches which are indisputably Tai are known by a bewildering variety of names, which serve to conceal their identity".

The Tai are a very ancient race and like other such races their origin is shrouded in obscurity. All that is said about their origin and development in the early period by modern writers is largely based on legendary accounts contained in ancient books. Hence these writers, in attempting to construct an historical narrative of the early periods of this race out of the available data in fragments and fables, have had to resort to conjectures and interpretations on many points. One of the most eminent scholars in this field, Professor M. Terrien de Lacouperie, from his close study of the Chinese records, asserts that "the cradle of the Shan race was in the Kiulung mountains, north of Setchuen and south of Shensi, in China Proper." Probably the progenitors of this race, being driven by the hardships of the semi-desert North in the regions about Mongolia, migrated to the south at an early period following the courses of the Yellow River. Dr. B. Laufer, Curator of Anthropology, Field Columbian Museum, Chicago, traces that "the early home of the peoples of eastern Asia was in the Upper reaches of the Hoang-ho or Yellow River of China, and that from this centre the Tibetans migrated westward; the early tribes of Indo-China, southward; and the Chinese southeastward."² According to Max Müller the original seat of the Tai or Siamese branch of the Indo-Chinese peoples, called Shan by the Burmese, was in Central Asia and it was from that area that these people were the first to migrate to-

1a. "such as Tai, Htai, Pai-i, Moi, Muong, Tho or Do, Hkamti, with a very much greater number of local names, assumed by themselves or given them by their neighbours, such as Lao, Law, Hkum, Lu, Tai-long, Tai-noi, Tai-nō, Tai-man, Tai-mao, Tai-hké, Tai-loi, Pu-tai, Pu-nong (or Nung), Pu-man, Pu-jū, Pu-chei, Pu-en, Pu-yioi, Pu-sui, P'o, Pa, Shui Han, or Hua Pai-i, Pai-jên, Yu-jên, P'u-man, Pai, Hei, or Hwa T'u-lao, Nung or Lung-jên, Sha-jên, Hei or Pai Sha-jên, Minchia, Shui-chia-chung-chia, and many more still more purely local." - George Scott and Hardiman: *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Part I-Vol. I*, (Rangoon, 1900), pp. 187-8.

2. A.R. Colquhoun: *Amongst the Shans* (London, 1885.); Introduction to "The Cradle of the Shan race". p.lv.

3. Dr. Laufer's note to Rev. H.I. Marshall, Jan. 6, 1920 referred to by the latter in his book *The Karen People of Burma* (1922, Ohio State University), p.6.

wards the south and settle along the rivers Mekong, Menam, Irrawaddy and Brahmaputra.⁴ The history of their migration is a history of long centuries of struggle which they had to carry on both against the Chinese imperial pressure from the north and against the powerful neighbours in the south resulting in a succession of glorious periods of their supremacy in China, Burma, Laos, Assam and Siam down to the modern times.

It has been brought to our notice by recent researches that the Tai were ruling in Central and Eastern China with a comparatively advanced culture long before the formation of the so-called "Chinese race." In fact, the Chinese race is the product of a gradual process of amalgamation of many separate peoples belonging to different races including the Tai.⁵ But the real home of the Tai peoples, or rather the region where they developed as a distinct race, had been in South-west China whence, in course of time, under the pressure of the Chinese and of the invading Mongol hordes at a later date, they had to move in successive waves towards the south fanning out along the courses of the great rivers, the Irrawaddy, the Salween, the Menam, the Mekong and even the Brahmaputra consolidating their power over these areas. Thus sprang up, in course of time, numerous Tai States in the extensive river valleys of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, some acknowledging at times the nominal suzerainty of China, Burma or Cambodia, while others developing into independent kingdoms under their powerful potentates. Of the Tai States of earlier periods, particularly those that flourished before the sixth century A. D., systematic history is no longer available ; only the names of some are mentioned in the extant records with scant details in the form of stories.

Explanations so far given by scholars about the origin of the racial name 'Tai', or 'Thai' as pronounced in southern and central Siam, are not conclusive. But the latter word 'Thai', used in the sense of 'free' or the free people, has a history of its own in the traditions of Thailand (Siam). It is said that in the seventh century A. D. a Tai prince, named Phra Ruang, was the ruler of Sangkalok (Svargalok), a principality of Zimmé (Chiengmai). He was a tributary chief under Cambodia, which at that time was supreme in south Indo-China. In A. D. 638 this prince rebelled against the ruler of Zimmé and seized that State overthrowing the suzerainty of Cambodia. He proclaimed himself sovereign of Zimmé and of the Tai people just liberated from the Cambodian yoke, and started the Siamese national era, which dates from A.D. 638.

4. Arthur P. Phayre : *History of Burma* (1883. London), pp. 6-7.

5. W. Eberhard : *History of China* (1950. London), Introduction, xiv.

Bishop Pallegoix is of the opinion that this took place "in the year 1000 of the era of Phra Khodom."⁶ Phra Ruang is mentioned in the Siamese Annals as a national hero of the Thai people. But the Phra Ruang Dynasty, so founded, did not last long. It was overthrown during his son's rule by the king of Kiang Tsen.⁷

This appears to be the earlier history of the Phra Ruang Dynasty. But the dynasty is said to have reappeared in the thirteenth century at Sukhodaya (Sukhot'ai) in the person of Sri Indrāditya, who firmly established his dynasty in that State by ousting the Cambodians. Bishop Pallegoix says that after Phra Ruang had freed the country from the Khmers, 'the *Sajam* took the name of *Thai*', which signified "free". This explanation is generally accepted by other scholars who want to explain the origin of the term 'Thai'. Phra Ruang, in this later period, seems to refer to both Indrāditya (ca. 1256-75) and his son, Rāma Khāmheng (ca. 1275-1317), but, as pointed out by Briggs, the name is sometimes applied to other kings of Siam. Phra Ruang (Phra Luang) was probably a patronymic title of the rulers of the dynasty. It is believed that in this case Rāma Khāmheng is certainly meant. If so, the date of the appearance of the form *Thai*, or *Tai*, in the written language, can be placed between A.D. 1292, when the form *Dai* appears in the inscription of this monarch, and A. D. 1317, the probable date of his death. In the context of the events of the earlier history of the Phra Ruang Dynasty the later use of the term *Dai* or *Thai* by Indrāditya or Rāma Khāmheng may be called only as its revival or rather restoration. Sukhodaya was, until its emergence as an independent Thai State, the northern capital of the Cambodian Empire. Thus the application of the term 'Thai' marked the liberation of the Tai people in the Menam Valley from the Cambodian yoke. Further the word had its origin in the Upper Menam Valley, though now it has its currency mainly in southern Siam.

According to some authorities the word 'Tai', as used from ancient times, comes from the Chinese word 'Tā', which means 'great'. Gait has also suggested almost a similar meaning of the word. According to him, 'Tai' means 'glorious' corresponding to Chinese 'celestial'.⁸ But it seems improbable that the appellation 'Tai' signifying great or glorious or heaven-born could be of Chinese origin. To the Chinese these

6. Phra = the Buddha, Khodom = Gotama. Cushing : *Grammar of the Shan Language* (Rangoon, 1887), Introduction, p. 3.

7. Holt S. Hallett : "Historical sketch of the Shans" in Colquhoun's *Amongst Shans* (1885), pp. 344-45.

8. *A History of Assam* (Calcutta : 1926), p. 246.

people were 'southern barbarians'. Recently Nai Likhit Hoontrakul⁹ of Siam, from his researches in the Chinese sources, has thrown new light on this point. He traces the origin of the racial name 'Tai' to an ancient official title giving certain rights and privileges to its holder. It was Seow-Hao (2nd Emperor : 2596-2513 B. C.), the second son of Hwang-ti, (the first Emperor of China : 2697-2596 B. C.) and uncle of Tuan-yok (3rd Emperor : 2513 - 2435 B. C.), whose descendants received the title of *Tai* or *Tai-Tai* which carries with it the full right to levy duties on the waterways.¹⁰ Emperor Tuan-yok, the grand-son of Hwang-ti, created a *Tai* family with a hereditary *Tai-Tai* title by conferring the title upon his nephew General Sin-How, who was apparently the grand-son of Seow-Hao. General Sin-How received the title for a victory which he had won over a powerful minister named Kung-Kang, who had led a rebellion against the Emperor with the object of usurping the throne. The title of *Tai* gave Sin-How and his descendants the right to impose on and collect duties from all who used the waterways of the Poon, (or Phen), the earlier name of the Hwang-Ho¹¹ or Yellow River, which flows through the provinces of Shan-si and Ho-nān. The enjoyment of the *Tai-Tai*'s hereditary right is said to have ended with the ascendancy of the Hia Dynasty (2205-1766 B. C.).

Thus the 'Tai' first appeared in the Chinese history in Shan-si and Ho-nān as early as 2515 B. C. The *Tai-Tai* was the only hereditary title of rank enjoyed by the highest aristocracy in ancient China and was regarded "as the first *Tai*, which led to many subsequent *Tai* titles, without the heritable rights, but accompanied by its meaning of honour, created in subsequent periods as Choung-Tai (Minister), Chi-Tai (Viceroy), Tung-Tai (Under-Secretary of State), Pu-Tai (Provincial Governor), Git-Tai (Provincial Chancellor), Pan-Tai (Provincial Financier), Tien-Tai (Provincial Commander-in-Chief) and Tao-Tai (Intendent of Circuit or Regional Governor)"¹² "This *Tai* means", says Hoontrakul, "a high stage or tower or a respectable and independent personage in address. The word is highly regarded as meaning freedom and well beloved in the soul of *Tai* people upto present day"¹³. Thus *Tai*, in course of time, came to carry the sense of high or great in position, which necessarily implied possession

9. L. Hoontrakul comes from a prominent Sino-Thai family of Hainanese descent.

10. L. Hoontrakul : *The Historical Records of the Siamese-Chinese Relations* (Bangkok, 1953), p. 13.

11. *Hwang* : Yellow, *Ho* : river.

12. L. Hoontrakul, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

13. *Ibid*, p. 16.

of great power and hence freedom from political subjection. When Phra Ruang, in the seventh century, used the term 'Thai' to mean the 'free people', he probably did it in this sense of the ancient word *Tai*.

The above history of the word *Tai* shows that the *Tai* belong to the race of early Emperors of China. From Hwang-Ti to Shih-Wang-Ti all the early Emperors are called Chinese in the books on China. But modern scholarship appears to reject the idea of the Chinese having ever flourished as an imperial power in the third or even the second millennium B.C. Though both the communities, the *Tai* and the Chinese, are of common Mongoloid origin and akin to each other, yet recent researches in the archaeology and history of China disclose the startling fact that the Chinese, as such, did not appear on the scene as a great ruling power before the first millennium B.C. In this background the *Tai* have undoubtedly a claim to greater antiquity in China as a ruling race than the Chinese.

According to Professor Coedés 'Tai' or 'Thai' is synonymous with the name 'Dai'. In the inscription of King Rāma Khāmheng¹ of Sukhot'ai, dated 1292, which is said to be the first known specimen of *Tai* writing in Indo-China, the name of the language and the people is represented by symbols, which Coedés, who made the literal translation of the inscription into French, translates as *Dai*.¹⁴ It is further held that 'Dai' was probably the name of the *Tai* prior to the separation of the three linguistically and ethnologically closely allied groups of the Thai, Kadai and Indonesians somewhere in Yün-nān more than three thousand years ago.¹⁵ But in view of what has been said above about the origin and antiquity of the word *Tai*, a date more than 4,400 years from now, the word *Dai* appears to be a later corruption of 'Tai' in certain parts of East Asia. Even to this day the basic word *Tai* or its aspirated form *Thai*, and not *Dai*, is universally used by this race of people to refer to itself everywhere irrespective of their various local names.

Cushing, who worked many years among the Shans, says *Tai* is the regular form and the writers of the Burmese Shan school agree. Briggs says that the French do not seem to agree among themselves on the point. But Maspero and some others seem to accept *Tai* as the generic name of

14. Lawrence Palmer Briggs : "The Appearance and Historical usage of the Terms *Tai*, *Thai*, *Siamese* and *Lao*" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 69, No. 2, April-June 1949, p. 62. Also George Coedés, *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam* : 1. Les inscriptions du Sukhodaya 47-8 (Bangkok, 1924).

15. JSS, vol. XL, pt. 1, 1952, pp. 75,80 for reference to G. Coedés: *Les langues de l'Indochine*, 1948.

the people, but adopt the aspirated (*T'ai* or *Thai*) form for the name of the language. Bishop Pallegoix, a French missionary who served many years in Siam and wrote a dictionary of the language, explains *Thai* by saying that after Phra Ruang had freed the country from the Khmers, 'the *Sajam* took the name of *Thai*, which signified "free",¹⁶ as already mentioned above. But Briggs points out that this explanation is older than Pallegoix. It may be noted that the term *Thai* was first applied, according to the French authorities, only to the inhabitants of the ancient kingdom of Sukhot'ai, and this was precisely the region to which the terms *Syam Sajam Siem* and *Sien* (*Hsien*), which finally resulted in Siam, were originally applied.¹⁷ Thus the name *Syam* or *Sajam*¹⁸ in Sukhot'ai appears to have preceded the name *Thai*, not *Tai*. The Tai of Sukhot'ai, however, have not left any account of their early history to enable us to solve this question beyond all doubts and more authoritatively.

It is remarkable that the Indonesians of Hai-nan call themselves Hiao in the centre and Dai in the southern part and Li and Lai in the south-western part and these groups are said to speak different dialects which may have sprung originally from the same language. Paul Benedict's researches have led to the discovery that close linguistic affinities exist between the Thai, Kadai and Indonesians.¹⁹ Again 'Doi' or 'Dioi' is said to be another name for 'Dai' and the former might have arisen from the phonetic variation of the latter word. But 'Doi' means a hill or mountain not only in the northern Siamese language but also in the languages of the northern Tai, such as that of the Ahoms of Assam. The words 'Tai' and 'Doi' mean also companions or comrades in the Ahom language. Erik Seidenfaden is inclined to believe that 'Li', 'Lai' and 'Loi' are but the other forms of 'Day' or 'Dai'. In plenty of cases *Ahom da* becomes *la* in Shan, both being two branches of the same original Tai language. As for instance, Ahom *dai* (thread), *doi* (mountain or hill), *den* (moon), *dao* (star) become respectively *lai*, *loi*, *lun*, and *law* in Shan. Hence the above change from 'Dai' to 'Lai', 'Loi' or 'Li' is quite possible. The distinguished French orientalist M. Paul Mus, after

16. *JACS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 62 : Mgr. J.B. Pallegoix : *Description du royaume Thai, ou Siam* 2. 64 (Paris, 1854).

17. Briggs : *Ibid*, p. 62.

18. In Tai *y* and *j* are often interchangeable. It is also said that in Malay, the word for 'brown race' is said to be *Sajam* (Pallegoix, 1.5) or *Sagam* (Anna Leonowens, *Romance of the harem* 1).

19. Paul Benedict : "Thai, Kadai and Indonesian, a New Alignment in South-east Asia", *American Anthropologist*, vol. 44. 1942. ; *JSS*, (vol XI, Pt. 1, Bangkok. July 1952), PP. 73-75.

a careful examination of the vocabularies prepared by Father Savina²⁰ says that the 'Dai' or 'Li' language contains many Thai elements. It must also be known that Hai-nan is mentioned by the ancient Chinese writers as the land of the 'barbarian Li people'. Monsieur Bons d'Anty, the consul for France in Canton, who had many opportunities of studying the race, believes that the Li, the inhabitants of the interior of Hainan, are pure Tai.²¹ Fr. Savina²² actually found in the Hai-nan island a Tai community, locally called Ong Beor Bae, with a population of 400,000.

The Shans

The name or rather the title 'Tai' undoubtedly refers to the race whereas the designation 'Shan', said to be of Burmese origin, means probably "Highlanders". But actually the Burmese Shans are the descendants of the ancient Tai -Yai, the Great Tai, and all legends agree on this.²³ The Mon records mention contingents from the Shan States of the mountainous country beyond Burma proper entering and invading Upper Burma. Sometimes they refer to the invaders simply as 'Shans'.²⁴ It may be noted that the word *Shan* in Chinese means a mountain or highland and to the Burmese the Shans were merely the people, who descended upon the 'plains of Upper Burma from the Shan States or Hill States of the southern Highlands of Yün-nān, a country predominantly of Tai population, particularly the areas adjoining the Northern Shan States of Burma. The Burmese probably referred to these people as Shan after the Chinese *Shand-tse* and *Shan-yen* meaning "highlanders".²⁵ As re-

20. Published in the *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient*, vol. XXXI, pp. 103-9 under "Lexique Day Francaise" i.e. a French-Day Dictionary and also a comparative table of the two Day dialects.

21. J. George Scott and Hardiman : *GUBSS*, 1,1. p. 187.

22. The late Revered Father F.N. Savina lived in Hainan for more than four years from 1924 to 1928 and travelled widely. He was a real polyglot and was able to converse with the natives in their own tongue. He wrote among others a monograph on Hainan with its title *Monographie de Hainan*. He specially studied the Li tribes of Hainan. He broadly classified the population of the island (about 2,000,000) into three groups locally called the Hok-lo, ong Beor Bae and Hiao-oo or Day. The Hok-lo are Chinese who occupy the northeastern part and all the coast line, the Ong Beor Bae are Tai who occupy the northwestern and the Li tribes the central parts of the island and the Hiao and the Dai, supposed to be Indonesians, occupy respectively the central and southern parts--Major Erik Seidenfaden's Note on Rev. Fr. Savina, *JSS*, vol. XL, pt. i, 1952.

23. *JAOS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 64.

24. D.G.E. Hall : *Burma*, (London, 1950), p. 31.

25. *Shan* : highland, *tse* and *yen* or *jen* : man together meaning hillmen or highlanders. A.H. Keane : *Man : Past and present*, edited by Quiggin and Haddon, Cambridge, 1920, p. 191. Refer also to Dr. A.H. Keane's contribution on the Shans in *The Living Races of Mankind*, (London Hutchinson & Co.) p. 173.

ferred to above the Tai are also called Doi, which means a mountain or a hill. The Chinese name for the Tai people of this area is Pa-i. 'Pa' in Chinese means 'cultivated highlands' and 'i' means 'barbarians'. Hence Pa-i means barbarian or non-Chinese cultivators of the highlands of Yün-nān.²⁶ It is said that the Burmese originally learnt the terracing of hill slopes for cultivation from the Tai cultivators of Nānchao in Yün-nān.²⁷ It appears that Chinese 'Shan' was Burmanized into 'Sham' and written as Shan as the Burmese words ending in *m* are usually turned into *n*. But the peoples, referred to as Shans in Burma, called themselves only Tai.

Mr. A. R. Colquhoun, who made extensive travels of exploration in the Southern provinces of China, found that most of the aborigines of that region were shans although the Chinese called them by various nicknames. Their propinquity to the Chinese is largely responsible for their gradual change in habits, manners, and dress and their absorption by that people.²⁸ What is true of the Shans of China in this respect is also true of the Ahoms of Assam and many of the Shans of Burma outside the Shan States. The Ahoms took to the Hindu ways of life and many Shans of Burma to the Burmese ways in dress, language and culture. Particularly in the fashion of their clothing the North-western Shans have assimilated themselves to the Burmans in the midst of whom they live.²⁹ But yet the racial identity of the Tai-Shans is recognisable from their physical type, colour, tradition and history.

The Burmese gave the appellation 'Shan' to those Tai that entered the plains of Burma in the thirteenth century A. D.³⁰ This apparently refers to the period when Kublai Khan's invasion of Ta-li in 1253 caused a mass migration of these people, mostly as refugees, into the Shan States of Upper Burma and the Upper Menam Valley in Siam. But the word Sham or Shan must have been formed and used at a date much earlier than this. During the early centuries of the Christian era the peoples of Burma almost certainly knew the Tai as Taroks or Tayoks (but written as 'Tarops'). There is mention in Burmese history of two irruptions into Burma by the Taroks³¹ from Yün-nān, one not long before

26. Colquhoun : *op.cit.*, p. 207.

27. D.G.E. Hall : *A History of South-east Asia* (London, 1955,) p. 123.

28. Hallett : *Historical Sketch of the Shans* in Colquhoun's *Amongst the Shans*. p. 328.

29. Alleyne Ireland : *The Province of Burma*, vol. 1, 1907, pp. 63-4.

30. Harvey : *History of Burma*, (Calcutta, 1925), p. 4.

31. In Burmese *Tayok* or later mentioned as *Shan-Tayok*. E.R. Leach points out in his book *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (P.32) (G. Bell and Sons, Ltd. London, 1954) that 'the Burmese make a distinction between Burmese Shans (*Shan B'mah*), Chinese Shans (*Shan Tayok*) and Hkamti Shans'.

the Christian era and most probably during Binnaka Raja's reign in old Pagan in the first quarter of the sixth century B. C. and the other about A. D. 241 or probably A. D. 225. According to Cushing, an eminent authority on the Shans, these invaders could not have been Chinese, for the Chinese did not establish any real connection with the Burmans until after the conquest of Yün-nān by Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century. These Taroks must have been the Tai, who were in that period the most predominant people in Yün-nān. Cushing is of the opinion that the irruptions mentioned here seem to indicate the presence at those early dates of a powerful Tai kingdom or kingdoms in Yün-nān, whence the invaders were sent.³²

Of the earlier migrations of the Tai into Burma that of the sixth century A. D. is of historic importance. These immigrants from South-west China, who were not, however, known as Shans, advanced westwards along the river valleys of Upper Burma and conquered the territories then under an Indian dynasty, whose capital was at Tagaung and about whom more would be told later. What is noteworthy here is that all these invaders, who came and established their political supremacy over Upper Burma, called themselves Tai as found in the ancient Chronicles. As they entered Burma immediately from South-west China they were designated, more specifically, as Tai Khé or Tai Ché. Major Davies points out that it is in the Shan States of Burma and also perhaps of its eastern neighbourhood that these Chinese Shans are so called. The Chinese Shans generally call themselves *Tai Nö*, or Northern Tai (Shans), while they refer to the inhabitants of the Shan States as *Tai Tua*, Southern Tai (Shans), and not *Tai Löng*, Great Tai (Shans). A few Tai Tau also exist in Yün-nān close to the Burmese border in Mengting.³³ The Tai-Khé or Tai-Nö branch of the Tai is also known in the Shweli valley as Tai-Mao or simply as Mao. But Sham or Shan is a distinctive appellation used by the Burmese to refer to the Tai immigrants of a much later period and under different circumstances. According to an eminent writer 'Shan' appears to be the collective Burmese name given to all different Tai people that entered Burma just as 'Lao' is the collective Siamese name for the Tai peoples formerly subject to Siam and since 1896 who became mostly French subjects.³⁴ In this sense the appellation 'Shan' is more political than purely ethnical and represents the nation as distinguished from the different groups constituting it. Even the Thai people

32. Dr. Cushing's Monograph on the Shans : vide Mr. H.L. Eale's *Report on the Census of Burma*, 1892, p. 200.

33. Davies : *Yün-nān*, pp. 380-81.

34. Keane : *ibid.*, p. 191.

of Siam are called Shan by the Burmese. To the Annamites they are Xiem, which is perhaps a variant of Siam, . Major H. R. Davies points out that the Kachins, A-Changs, Zis and La-shis call the Shans by the name of Sam, the Ma-ru name for them is Sen, the Palaung name is Tsem, the Wa name Shem, and the Talajngs call them Sem.³⁵ All these names appear to be mere phonetic variations of the original word 'Shan' in the different tribal tongues.

Siam :

'Siam' is another name of which the origin is a subject of controversy. It is said that Siam is the same word as Shan, a form coming to us through the Portuguese *Siao*.³⁶ J. Leyden points out that "by the Barmas, they (the Siamese) are denominated *Syan*, from whence the Portuguese seem to have borrowed their *Siam* or *Siaom*, from whom the other nations of Europe have adopted the term".³⁷ Others believe that it has been derived from Malay *Sayam* meaning brown. Cushing says that "it may not be generally known that the form Siam is nothing but a corruption of the French method of writing Shan as 'Sciam'. He further says that "in adopting the French method of spelling the word, we mispronounce the name because we make two syllables of the word. This mispronunciation, however, has become generally accepted, and to call the Shans of Bangkok anything but Siamese would be needlessly misleading as well as pedantic. Moreover, the difference in the name is now useful, as it marks off the Southern branch of the Tai or Htai race."³⁸ Dr. Grierson, who substantially agrees with Cushing, also points out that the word 'Siam' appears to be an Anglicised form of the Portuguese or Italian 'Sciam' which is an attempt to write 'Sham', a variant of 'Shan'.³⁹ Thus the words Sam, Siam and also Cham (not the Austronesian Cham of modern Annam) undoubtedly stand for the original name Shan. That the Tai, the Shans, the Siamese and the Ahoms (from A-sham) belong to the same racial group is proved by the fact that the Tai from the north are called Shan-gyi or Great Shans by the Burmese, 'Sam' in Assam by

35. *Yün-nān : The Link between India and the Yangtze*. (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 377-87. See also E.R. Leach : *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. (The London School of Economics and Political Science, G. Bell and Sons Ltd, London, 1954), pp. 29-30.

36. Keane : *ibid.*, p. 191.

37. *Asiatic Researches* : vol X, London, 1811 : vide, "On the Languages and Literature of the Indo-Chinese Nations" by J. Leyden, M.D.-X Thay.

38. Eale's *Report on the Census of Burma*, 1892, p. 200.

39. *Linguistic survey of India*, vol, II. Tai Group : General Introduction.

the Assamese and Tai-gut or the left-behind Tai by the Siamese, the latter meaning those Tai who did not come with the Siamese to Ayuthia, the Siamese themselves being called Yodia Shan by the Burmese.⁴⁰

But the above explanations are concerned mainly with the form of the word 'Siam' and not with its origin. Regarding the latter point some scholars suggest that the name 'Siam' is derived from the Sanskrit word *Syāma* meaning 'black'. When the Indians first colonised this country the fair-coloured Hindus called the native population "Black" (Skt. "Syama", Pali, "Sāmo"). This black population, according to these writers, referred to the Thai, who, on their part, called the country Muang Thai, the country of the Thai people.⁴¹ But this view is obviously wrong, because the Thai people are as fair as the Hindus or rather fairer on the average. If the early Hindu colonists would have at all applied the term 'Syāma' to designate a black race they could have done so more appropriately to refer to the black-skinned inhabitants of Funan (Southern Cambodia), where they had landed much earlier than in Siam and spread their culture. The Funanese were described as ugly, black, frizzy-haired and naked by Kang Tai, a Chinese envoy, who visited that country between A.D. 245 and A.D. 250. Kang Tai was also the first person to mention in his accounts the name of Hun-tien, who founded the kingdom of Funan in the first century A. D. It is also said that Hun-tien was but a Chinese transliteration of Kaundinya, a political adventurer from India. The name 'Kaundinya' suggests that he was the descendant of the original Kaundinya, who was a Brahman, but was first to be converted by Buddha.⁴² But in this case the conqueror of Funan (Kamboja-deśa) appears to be a Hindu Kṣatriya prince of the Kaundinya *gotra* and the kings of that dynasty adopted this family name. Maspero suggests that the first invasion by Kaundinya came from Java and formed part of a great movement, possibly with its central seat in Java, that led to the foundation of other Hindu States in Champā and Borneo in that early period of the

40. Ney Elias : *Introductory Sketch of the History of the Shans*, 1876, p.2 : Colquhoun : *ibid* p. 207. Yodia, pronounced 'Euria' by the Burmese, is simply Ayothia or Ayodhya, the old capital of Siam and Yodia Shans means the Shans of the kingdom of Ayodhya.

41. G. Schlegel : *Siamese studies*, 1902, pp. 6-7; P.N. Bose : *The Indian colony of Siam*, 1927, p. 2.

42. Edward J. Thomas : *The History of Buddhist Thought*, 1953, pp. 136, 183. Hun-tien's name is mentioned in the annals of the Chi dynasty (479-501). But in the annals of the Tsin dynasty the stranger's name is given as Hun-Hui, who worshipped the Devas and had a dream, in which one of them gave him a bow and ordered him to sail for Funan. He then set out for this new land and conquered it and married the queen, who ruled there. -vide Pelliot's *Fouan*, also Eliot : *op.cit.*, vol.III, pp. 104-5.

Christian era. At that time the modern Siam was included in the dominions of the Empire of Funan, which extended from Annam to the Bay of Bengal. It is extremely doubtful that there was any Tai population worth the name in the Menam valley in that early period. It is also not known that the Tai of Siam ever professed Hinduism as a national religion.

In the tenth century A. D. the central part of Thailand (Siam) was called by the Mon-speaking people of Dvāravati as "Sāma-deś" or the Land of the Sāms. Briggs refers to a Pali document, *Jinakālamālini* written in 1516 which, in speaking of events in 1339, mentions 'Sukhodaya-pura in Syāmadeśa' (i. e., country of the Syām, or of the 'dark brown people')⁴³ Phya Amuman Rajadhan, an eminent Thai scholar of Bangkok, points out that the word 'Sām' was Pali-ized into 'Sāma' and then Sanscritized into 'Syāma' and Europeanized into 'Siam'. This appears to be the most probable development of the word 'Sām' or 'Shan' into 'Siam'. Some scholars trace the origin of the word Siam to 'Sien' of the Chinese, who applied that name to the Thai kingdom of Sukhot'ai (Skt. Sukhodaya).⁴⁴ Francis Buchanan, from his local investigations, learns that the Thai people of Siam were called 'Syianlo' or 'Kyaenlo' by the Chinese of Yün-nān.⁴⁵ Thus these 'Syianlo' or 'Sienlo' were the people of 'Sien' country or Sukhot'ai. The Khmers used the name 'Syām' to refer to the 'Savages' from the middle Menam. That these savages were no other than the Tai, who were destined to be the powerful rivals of the Khmers, is further confirmed by the fact that in the bas-reliefs of the South-west gallery of the Angkor Wat⁴⁶ are depicted soldiers dressed like the Cambodians and described in the inscriptions as troops of Lvo,⁴⁷ while those depicted on the South gallery and dressed and armed in a different manner are mentioned as the soldiers of Syam-Kuk (Sukhot'ai), the latter being Thai mercenaries⁴⁸ exhibited as representing martial characteristics different from those of the Cambodians. Peaceful pene-

43. *JAOS*. vol. 69, 1949, pp. 68-9 ; also *BEFE-O* 1925-95.

44. Hall ; *op.cit.*, p. 150; P.N. Bose; *op.cit.*, Foreword by P.C. Bagchi, pp. V-VII.

45. "A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire" in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. V, 4th Ed., 1807, pp. 227-28.

46. Angkor is a corruption of Nokor (=Nagar). Angkor Thom=Mahanagara.-Eliot. *op.cit.*, III, p. 110.

47. The country of Lvo is also mentioned in an inscription of the end of the tenth century A.D. discovered at Lopburi. Lvo of the Angkor-Vat inscription, *Lo hou* of the Chinese annals, and Lavo of the ancient Siamese is the same as the Lopburi (Skt. Navapurī) flourishing in the lower valley of the Menam. "P.C. Bagchi in P.N. Bose's book, p. V.

48. Hall : *op.cit.*, p. 144.

tration of the Tai into the Menam valley began from a much earlier date and by about the ninth century A.D. many Tai cities (Muangs) were found to have developed among the Mons and the Khmers. From the latter part of the ninth century the Tai in the Upper Menam and the middle Mekong region assumed an aggressive role putting increasing pressure on the Khmer dominions and annexing or liberating from the Khmer yoke parts of those dominions from time to time in the following centuries.

The territories, which the Tai mostly inhabited in the Menam valley, were known as Siem, Syam or Syama.⁴⁹ According to Gerini the Mon word for Siamese is *Sem*; the Khmer word is *Siem*; the Chinese word is *Sien* or *Hsien*; the Cham, *Syam*; and the Malay, *Siam*.⁵⁰ Briggs thinks that the first Europeans, the Portuguese, who came in contact with the Siamese in 1511, called them *Sião* (= *Sian* in English), probably from Malay. This explanation is less convincing than that given by Cushing. The name 'Syam' is found first in an inscription of Champa (in Sanskrit) of A. D. 1050. The Cham inscription speaks of taking Syam prisoners along with Khmers and Chinese. About a century later (1150) they appear on the bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat as mercenaries in the Khmer army where the accompanying sanskrit inscriptions call them *Syam* and *Syam-kuk*. *Syam* here refers to the Tai of the upper or rather middle Menam. According to Gerini, the word appears in Ptolemy's *Sāma-rade* (2nd Century) which is interpreted as *Sāmarāttha*.⁵¹ Here 'Syam' is commonly identified with Sanskrit 'Syama' meaning black or dark, but actually Syama appears to be a Sanskritized distortion of the non-Sanskrit original. Further *Sāmarade* is in the lower Menam valley where the presence of the Tai in Ptolemy's time is most improbable. The Chinese historians refer to frequent embassies appearing at the Chinese court from the States of *Sien* (*Hsien*) and *Lo-hou* between 1282 and 1323⁵² and these two States were undoubtedly the Syam and Lvo of the Khmers as mentioned in the inscribed labels of Angkor Wat. Syam and Lvo are identified with Sukhot'ai and Lopburi. About the same time, the name *Sien-lo* (*Hsien-lo*) was also applied by the Chinese to these people.⁵³ The kingdom of Sukhot'ai was then well known in Eastern Asia under the name Syam or *Sien* and its founders were called 'Syam-kuk or *Sien-lo*. Aymonier

49. Eliot : *op.cit.*, III, p. 79.

50. *JAOS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 69.

51. Gerini : *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, 1909, p. 170.

52. Paul Pelliot : *Deux itinéraires etc.*, *BEFE-O* 1904, 230-1.

53. Pelliot : *Memoires sur les coutumes de Cambodge*, par Tchou Ta-Kouan. *BEFE-O*, 1902. 112 as referred to by Briggs in *JAOS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 62.

read the name in the Angkor Wat inscriptions as *Syam-kut* and Pelliot followed his reading, but Coedés, who made a thorough study of these inscriptions, says the reading is clearly *Syam-kuk*.⁵⁴ At this time the territories south of Lvo were still held by the Cambodians. In the above context *Sien*, *Siem* and *Syam* appear to be the variants of *Shan* or *Shām*, and *Siam* is the Europeanized form of it. Chinese *Sien* was simply the land of the *Shan* people.⁵⁵ The terms *Syam* or *Sam* preceded the name *Thai* in this area.

These *Tai* people were earlier living in the hills in Southern *Yün-nān* before getting down to the fertile plains of the *Mekong* and the *Menam* rivers.⁵⁶ Most of these people had to seek shelter in the hills leaving their homes in the rich plains of *Sze-chuan*, *Yün-nān* and *Kwei-chow* as early as the third century A. D. when General *Chuko-Liang* of the *Han* invaded *Yün-nān*, apparently to put down a rebellion. The last greatest exodus of these people to the south was when in the middle of the thirteenth century the *Mongols* under *Kublai Khan* swept down to *South China*. It seems therefore that the appellations *Shan* (or *Sham*), *Sam*, *Sien*, *Siem*, *Syam* or *Siam* were used from about the ninth or tenth century A. D. by the different peoples in referring to the *Tai*

54. *Bulletin de la commission archeologique de l'Indochine* 1911. 203, note 3; *JAOS*. vol. 69, 1959, p. 62.

55. *Terrien de Lacouperic*, writing much earlier, connects the *Tai-Shan* race with the ancient *Shang* (*Shang*, *Traders*), who, after overthrowing the *Hia* dynasty about the sixteenth century B.C., established their sway over northern *China*. The very name '*Shang*' is supposed to be the antecedent of the cognate appellatives *Shan* and *Siam*. He points out that many names, such as *Tchang*, *Siang*, *Shen*, *Sien* and similar others are met with representing one original name in the nomenclature of native clans and tribes of the same stock in its earlier seats in *Central China* over which there was no *Sanskrit* influence. Hence he has dismissed the proposed etymology for *Siam* from *Sanskrit*, "*Syama*", black, as inadequate as the original racial name is certainly older than this supposed origin would permit.—*op.cit.*, p. 1. Whatever may be the real origin of the words *Shan* and *Siam*, the appearance of names, such as *Shen* and *Sien*, in *Central China* is remarkable for the presence of same names far South in *Indo-China* at a much later period when the *Tai* had already migrated to that region. As in *Central China* these names in the *Irrawaddy* and the *Menam* Valleys undoubtedly refer to *Tai* tribes and their principalities. Moreover they point not only to the earlier abode of the race but also indicate the general direction of its movement to the South. If *Terrien de Lacouperic's* statement can be relied upon, then the original *Shen* or *Sien* might well have become *Shan* in the south and become *Sam* and *Siam* as these people spread further to the south and west in the *Indo-Chinese* peninsula. In that case *Shen* or *Sien* must have been an appellation given by the *Chinese* to the original *Tai* race as a term of contempt signifying a conquered people, or it was a *Chinese* place name from which the *Tai*, who had their abode in it, acquired this appellation. But the *Chinese* tonal differences of words meaning different things can not always be expressed in foreign words. Hence mere similarity of spelling of words may not always mean the same thing. Neither is there any historical evidence in support of the above identification.

56. *L. Hoontrakul* : *op.cit.*, p. 99.

immigrants from the southern highlands of Yün-nān. But the name Siam became prominent in history only in the thirteenth century which is also the Sukhodaya period.⁵⁷

Assam : Ahom :

The Shans from Burma were called Sām in Assam and at a later stage Sām became Sanskritized into syām among the Assamese Hindus. The name of the Shans as Sām was perhaps first heard by the inhabitants of Eastern Assam from the Kachins (Singphos on the Assam side) on the eastern border of Assam. In Assam 'Sām' or 'Syām' does not mean 'black', only the tribe is known by that name to the local people. The appellation Ahom is applied to the pre-British Tai rulers of Assam. After the British occupation of Assam the Ahoms found themselves gradually reduced to the status of a distinct community only among the population of the Brahmaputra valley, their habitat being virtually confined to the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur in Eastern (or Upper) Assam. The word 'Ahom' appears to be a phonetic variation of 'Asam' or 'Asama', which is itself a Sanskritized distortion of Ā-Sām, a form of Boḍo origin. Ā of the Deori-Chutiya Boḍo group, which is deaspirated from Hā in Boḍo, means earth, land or country and when the Tai or Sāms conquered the upper-part of the Brahmaputra valley in Assam and established their kingdom in it the Boḍo people called that area Ā-Sām, the country or kingdom of the Sāms. In the old Assamese Buranjis and religious books the writers referred to the Ahoms or their kingdom as Āsām, Ācām, Āsyām, Asam or Acam. These words were so written either from actual Ā-Sām, the land of the Sāms or its Sanskritized variant *Asam* (peerless, unequalled) which the Pandits used in their writings during the great days of the Ahoms. The words *Āsām*, *Ācām* and *Asam* (or *Asom*) were further corrupted in the early British period into *Āham* and *Aham* and lastly into *Ahom*, the present form of the earlier Sām or Āsām to refer to the race instead of the country. Whatever may be the course of word development according to the rules of Philology, it is difficult to think otherwise than that 'Āsām' developed from 'Sām' in the dialects of the peoples of the Brahmaputra valley region and, at a later period, 'Āsām' was put in writings in the Sanskritized

57. In the English language the name Siamese refers to the people of Siam and Siam refers to the country of these people. L. Hoontrakul points out that King Khun Sri Indratit of Sawankalok moved southward and built a capital called Sukhat'ai and established a kingdom called Siam. He also says that in Chinese Siam means High Noon. -*op.cit.*, pp. 101, 104. Does Siam mean here simply the most powerful kingdom or a great kingdom? It is difficult to explain the word Siam in this sense in reference to the Siamese people.

form 'Asam', from which the name Ahom has evolved. Assam (Anglicized) or Asam is the lard of the Sāms (the Tai-Ahoms), who first established their independent kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley in the thirteenth century. The name Āsām, and not Sanskritized Assamese 'Asam' (Assam), is therefore correct in the original sense. 'Āsām' refers to a definite political change in the history of Assam, whereas 'Asam' is a convenient transformation under Sanskrit influence and hence admitting of all manner of explanations, such as unequal, uneven, etc. In recent times the Assamese have, however, preferred the Sanskritized form 'Asam' to 'Ā-sām' or Assam and have used it as the standard form of the name of their State. In this connection it may be mentioned that the term "Assamiya" (Assamese) means to-day the Aryanised Assamese language of Assam and, in the present day practice, the term is also used more and more to mean only the section of the population speaking this language. But in history by the term Assamese (Āshām or Āsām) only the Ahoms (the Tai of Assam) were referred to both by the Mughal writers⁵⁸ and Hindu Vaiṣṇava preachers.⁵⁹ The Mughal writer's *Ashām* and the Vaiṣṇava writer's *Asam* were without doubt merely characteristic variants of original Ā-sām.

But the Ahoms have never referred to themselves as Shan or Sām or by any of its Assamese variants including Ahom in their own literature or *buranjis*, written in Tai. This is true of their writings down to the end of their rule in Assam. They always called themselves Tai and their scholars wrote as such throughout the historical period. The downfall of the Ahom rule was followed by a dark period in the glorious traditions of Assam. With the loss of independence and under the changed conditions, political and cultural, of the last hundred years or so the Ahoms have fast deteriorated in mental and physical vigour and forgotten their own language, history and historical link with their race in the great sub-continent of South-east Asia. As a result they now generally call themselves not Tai but by the local name Ahom which is little known to the Tai of the rest of Asia. Only in very recent times historical researches seem to have brought a certain degree of consciousness to the Ahoms about their past and racial identity.

58. Shihabu'd-Din Talish : *Fa-thiya-i-'Ibriya (Ta'rikh-i-Asham)* of which a text was published in Calcutta (24th May, 1849) by "Aftab-i-" Alamtab" Press. See Blochmann's translation (an abstract only), *JASB*; 1872; Sir Jadunath Sarkar : *JASB*. in 1906, 1907 and *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, vol. I, p. 179; also Gait : *A History of Assam* (Calcutta, 1926), particularly p. 140 (footnote) for the meaning of 'Assamese'.

59. Assamese *Nām Ghosā* (501).

Two other explanations of the terms Ahom and Assam deserve consideration. Dr. B. K. Kakati has attempted to connect the term *Āsām* as applied to the Shans with Tai $\sqrt{ch\bar{a}m}$, "to be defeated", with the Aryan Assamese privative prefix *ā-*, the whole formation *Āsām* meaning "undefeated" 'victorious', thus being a hybrid equivalent of the word Thai, (Tai) meaning free.⁶⁰ This explanation appears to be far-fetched. The Ahoms never called themselves *Āsām* or *Āchām*. If the Aryanized people of Assam ever called them by that name in the above sense it would presuppose a knowledge of the Tai language on their part in order that a comparatively obscure foreign word, such as 'chām', might be so used to coin a new word. But it is difficult to believe that the Assamese, in general had already any such knowledge. Moreover the word *chām*, *Shām* or *Hsām* of the Shans is a verb only and is not used either as an adjective or a noun. Hence *Āsām* or *Āchām* as a noun from *chām* is unlikely. If *Āsām* be a hybrid equivalent of the word Thai meaning free, 'Sām' or 'Siamese' would mean 'unfree' which is contrary to facts of history.

Dr. S. K. Chatterji suggests that the name *Ahom* comes from *Rhwam*, a name by which the Burmese referred to the Shan people when they first met the latter. The Burmese wrote the word *Rhwam* in the Mon script which they had adopted in the eleventh century A. D. "In course of centuries, owing to certain characteristic developments of the Burmese phonology, the word has now come to be pronounced in Modern Burmese as Shan, although the old orthography as *Rhwam* still persists (*Rhwam/ Yhwam/ Hyam/ Cyam/ Shan* : . . .) Now, the name *Ahom* would appear to be connected as a tribal name with this *Rhwam* : Dr. Chatterji seems to believe that either from "early dropping of the initial *R-* in *Ahom* mouths, or its modification to *A* gave the form *Ahom*. He further says that "Ahom as a foreign tribal name was not properly understood by Old Assamese speaking Hindu and other *Bc̄os* when the *Ahom* conquerors came into East Assam, and it would appear that the name *Ahom* was sought to be 'corrected', into what was thought to be its original Sanskrit form, as *A-sama* and this gave the word *Asam-Assam* as the name of the country which the *Ahoms* conquered and established themselves in."⁶¹ As pointed out already the modern *Ahoms* never wrote nor called themselves *Ahom* as a corruption of *Rhwam*. The word 'Ahom' is nowhere to be found in their *Tai-Ahom* literature. Hence it is difficult to imagine that the Assamese of those days could get this tribal name

60. *The Mother Goddess Kāmākhya*, p. 2. *Assamese, Its Formation and Development*, (Gauhati, 1962) pp. 2-3.

61. *The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India*—Banikanta Kakati Memorial Lectures, (Gauhati, 1954), pp. 42-3.

from the Ahoms to be corrected into its supposed Sanskrit form. Further it is Āsām, Asam, Ācām that is generally found in the earlier Assamese literature, the form Ahom being the latest development and that too in the British period. The Boḍos predominated in Eastern Assam at the time the Tai-Ahoms entered that land. The Kachins and the Boḍos called the Tai-Ahoms Sām. It is most certain that Assam, the name of the country, is from Ā-sām, the country of the Sāms, which was later Sanskritized into A-sama from which the forms Asom and Ahom gradually arose.

THE PAI-YI : (*Pā*, cultivated highland *yi*, barbarians) :

The Tai of South China are called Pā-yi or Pai-yi (barbarians).⁶² They are chiefly concentrated in the South-western bulge of Yün-nān across the frontier of Burma where they are also called Thai Nu'a. But the Pai-yi of South-eastern Yün-nān seem to be the ancestors of the Laotians, as well as of the Black Tai and White Tai of Tonkin.⁶³ In early periods they were referred to by the peoples of Burma as Tarōks or Shan-Tarōks and in the later period as Shans. These names were probably applied by the Pyu and the Mons of Burma, whose dominions once extended far to the north and were subject to inroads from China from time to time. The Tai people of South China have numerous sub-groups whom the Chinese called by various names, such as P'o, Pa or Pai-i, Shui Han or Hua Pai-i, Pai-jên, T'u-jên, P'u-man, Pai, Hai, or Hua T'u-lao, Nung or Lung-jên, Sha-jên, Hei or Pai Sha-jên, Min-Chia, or Hin-Ch'iang, Shui-Chia and Chung-Chia.⁶⁴ Among all these the Pai-yi⁶⁵ is the most numerous element and the Chinese use it as synonymous with Tai. They are both upland dwellers (*Han Pai-yi*) and river valley dwellers (*Shui Pai-yi*).

Ju-K'ang T'ien, writing on one of the Tai tribes called Mangshi in the South-west part of Yün-nān, said that the Chinese of the neighbouring districts say that these people are called Pa-i because they practise cults known as Pai which they consider to be essential features of their social life. "Pai"⁶⁶ is the comprehensive name given to a series of cultural activities having religious significance expressing the community's belief in the Buddha.⁶⁷ It may be noted that many

62. Erik Seidenfaden's Notes on Ethnic Groups of Northern Southeast Asia in *JSS.*, Vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 77.

63. *JAOS.*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 66.

64. *GUBSS.*, "Ethnology", p. 619.

65. Pai-yi is variously spelt as Pa-i, Pai-i, Paiyi, Pa-y, Pai'y, Peyih, Paeh, etc.

66. In the Shan Buddhist language 'pai', pronounced as 'pwei', means a religious festival.

67. *American Anthropologist*, vol. 51, Nov.i. 1949, pp. 46-59.

features of these cults are strikingly similar to those of the Assamese Bihu festivals.⁶⁸ The appellation Pai from Pai cults is undoubtedly a vulgar way of interpreting the meaning of the word. Pai or Poy means simply a festival and is not restricted to the cults mentioned above. What is important here is the essential features of the festivals which are more or less common to the festivals celebrated elsewhere among the Tai.

Professor T. de Lacouperie, relying on the Chinese sources, points out that the Pa or Pa-Y are a branch of the Tai and are "scattered from the south of Setchuen, throughout Yün-nān and south borders. We hear of them in 1971 B. C. when the Chinese ruler, K'i of Hia, is reputed to have sent to them his minister, Mong-t'u. They were subdued by the State of Ts'in in 338 B. C., and since that time have slowly advanced southwards. The oldest settlements were in Western Setchuen".⁶⁹ The early account given here refers to the mythical period and, even without denying some K'i of Hia (Hsia) of the time, we can not be definitely sure that there ever was a Chinese ruling House called Hia and hence Mangt'u's mission. Apparently at that time the Pa-y were enjoying free and independent life with a system of government of their own. But whether the Tai were actually known to the early kings of China by the name of Pa-y is doubtful. It is equally doubtful if there were powerful 'Chinese rulers' at that time. As regards the Pai people's movement further to the south from their earlier home in Western Sze-chuan J. Denikar says that their migrations may be followed from the first century B. C., when "the Pa-y tribes came from Sechuen into western Yün-nān to found there the kingdom of Luh-Tchao.

68. There are six Pai cults of which the Great Pai is the most important, the other cults being Public Pai, Chin-Hueng-Tan-Pai, Kan-To-Pai, Ting-Tang-Pai and Lan-se-Pai. The Great Pai, in its essentials, consists of the exhibition of certain articles which the house-holder presents as offerings to the village Buddhist temple. The ceremony extends over at least three days accompanied with various other activities including dancing, singing, feasting and processions. Other Pai festivals provide occasions for demonstrating the whole procedure of clothing manufacture, arts and crafts and their products and also the arrangement of daily work according to seasonal changes. The Assamese Bihus, too, apart from their religious significance, if any, must have had as their cardinal feature demonstration of the basic arts and culture and the mode of social life of the community. The Assamese national festival called Bohag Bihu, which is celebrated annually in April on the grandest scale with dances, songs, instrumental music and congregational merriment and with the exhibition of the best samples of clothes woven by the women in every family, represents the tastes and the artistic achievements of the Assamese people. Likewise the harvest festival or Magh Bihu, which is characterised by social entertainments with the choicest dinners and exhibition of wrestling power of the youth and animal fighting, represents the richness and variety of the harvests of the season. Stripped of their religious coating, whether Buddhist or Hindu, this group of social festivals, wherever they are found, in Yün-nān, Burma or Assam, appears to be peculiar to the Tai and the associated peoples.

69. *Op. cit.*, pp. li-llii.

Another kingdom, that of Muangling,⁷⁰ was founded more to the south-west in Upper Burma". The cause of these migrations was the pressure of the Chinese from the north.

Henri d' Orleans points out that Pa-i is only another name for Lao. He constantly met Pa-i groups all along the route from Tongking to Assam. He further says that the bulk of the lowland population of Assam (meaning the Ahoms), from whom Assam takes its name, belongs originally to the same family.⁷¹ Rev. William Clifton Dodd writes that both Pa and Lung belong to the Lao race and that he found both these tribes in Southern Yün-nān during his journey of 1910. They still bear the ancient tribal names, Pa and Lung. The modern Chinese call them *Pa-i*, the Pa barbarians and *Lungjên*, the Lung people. The Lung (or Nung) are mostly found now in Kuang-tung and Kwang-si. Rev. Dodd also says that their own speech is Lao or Tai as he found by talking with them and hearing them talk. The modern Pa call themselves Tai, but are invariably mentioned as Pa-i by the Chinese writers.⁷²

THE MUNG :

Chinese Annals refer to another group of people, called Tā Mung or Dai Mung, that is, the Great Mung, belonging to the same race, which is mentioned in the geographical survey instituted under the Emperor Tā Yu or Dai Yu (the Great Yu), said to be the founder of the Hia (or Hsia) dynasty.⁷³ Phra Sarasas points out that it was the Chinese who called this race (Tai) Dai Mung instead of Ai-Lao.⁷⁴ The Mung established themselves in China before the advent of the Chinese, but as to the origin and meaning of the word "Mung", nothing definite is known except that they are an integral section of the Tai. "The Mung", says Dr. Dodd, "belong to the Ai-Lao race. The Ai-Lao belong to the aborigines; the aborigines preceded the Chinese in the migration from the West; the Chinese themselves came earlier than 2200 B. C., probably much earlier".⁷⁵ If this statement can be relied upon then the pre-Ch'in early empires of the great Lao people can be said to have extended over the major part of the present China

70. probably Mōng Ling.

71. Keane : *op. cit.*, p. 192.

72. Dodd : *The Tai Race*, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1923), chap. I.

73. T. de Lacouperie : *op. cit.*, pp. 1-li.

74. *Ai-Lao* means senior or elder people. Sarasas : *My Country Thailand : Its History, Geography and Civilisation*, p.4.

75. Dodd : *op. cit.*, chap.I.

and the ruling aristocracy of the race, known as the Tai, spread to the different territorial divisions of the Lao dominions for the management of their administration. In later centuries the Ch'in Imperialists, in their vast drive for expansion, simply discovered the descendants of the early Tai, both as politically dominant communities in some areas and as scattered elements in others in the Central Belt of China and southwards and called them by various nicknames.

Tā Yu's reign is said to have commenced about 2208 B. C. and his name is mentioned in what is probably the earliest literary work, the *Shih Ching* (Classic of Poetry)⁷⁶. The great Mung people, who were contemporary of Tā Yu, must have had a glorious career in the early period of China, but we know little about it except by way of casual references made to them by Chinese historians until their reappearance as builders of the Nan-Chao empire in the seventh century A. D. The Tā Mung were in the region of the setting sun according to the *Erh-Ya*, the oldest known Chinese dictionary, compiled in the fifth century B. C., and their habitat was in the western part of the Sze-chuan province. The chief characteristic of the Mung people, as stated by the Chinese compilers, was sincerity. The Mung formed the leading family of the Nan-Chao agglomeration of tribes which united under it to set up that powerful Ai-Lao kingdom in Yün-nān which was destined later to flourish as the Nan-Chao empire. The Mung also played a leading part in several other agglomerations in subsequent periods.⁷⁷ They migrated eastwards and are to-day known to the Annamese as Muongs, who spread throughout the hilly regions in Tongking.⁷⁸

THE LÜ : THE HKÜN : THE YUNS : THE TCHAO :

It has been noted that Lüh or Lü and Muang or Mung are but different clan names of the same Tai-Shan race. The Lü of the left bank of the Mekong form the bulk of the population in the State of Hsip Hsawng Mōng (Keng Hung : lat. 22°, long. 100°50') and the neighbouring parts of southern Yün-nān.⁷⁹ Keng Hung is the Cheli of the Chinese and the Hsip Hsawng Panna (XII Panna) of the local Tai. Keng Tung has another group of Tai people called Hkün. The Yuns are concentrated in Lan-nā in Northern Siam, Chieng Mai was anciently called yun. These three sections of the Tai race are supposed to have des-

76. Latourette : *The Chinese : Their History and Culture*, (New York, 1946). p. 39.

77. T. de Lacouperie : *op. cit.*, p. li; Dodd, *op.cit.*, chap.I.

78. Dodd : *ibid* : Hallett : *op.cit.*, p. 329.

79. Davies : *Yün-nān*, p. 381.

cended from the Ngai-Lao on the Mekong, with whose *Kengs* theirs were continuous. Briggs says that they mixed with the Karens and with still earlier Lawas whose dwellings in the hills surrounded them. The Yuns conquered the Mons of Haripunjai and absorbed them. According to Pierre Lefevre-Pontalis the Lü spread to the south establishing their kingdom of Lao Chong below the Hsip-Hsawng-Panna in A. D. 701 with its capital of Chieng Rao which was in the beginning of the tenth century A. D. moved near Chieng Sen.⁸⁰ The Tchao, as mentioned in connection with Lüh-Tchao, were simply the easternmost branch of the same Tai race that occupied Central China at that time. They lived in what is now An-hui in the vicinity of the Lao mountains. The meaning of the name Tchao is, according to Professor T. de Lacouperie, a nesting people, so called from their habit of building their houses on piles. He further says that it was among them, possibly as a cognate tribe, that the founder of the Shang dynasty exiled Kieh, the last ruler of the overthrown Hia dynasty in 1558 B.C.⁸¹ The Tchao spread southwards in the subsequent periods into Kiangsi and became an important constituent of the population of the Tsu Kingdom. In the tenth century A.D. they moved under pressure from the north into the region of Hunan, western Kwang-si and Kweitchou and many even left China for the neighbouring countries. They are still largely represented by the Tu-jên, Tchung-kiä and other tribes now found in Kwang-si and Kwei-chow. Some of these people must have migrated even from much earlier times to Yün-nän and Burma and set up their own States.

THE LAOS :

A very important section of the Tai called Lao deserve special notice. To-day the inhabitants of North Siam are described as Lao.⁸² Actually the Laos are scattered over southern China, northern French Indo-China and the north and north-eastern parts of Siam itself.⁸³ It is the southern Thai who call the Thai people of northern and eastern Siam Lao. Cushing mentions the Lao as one of the several divisions of the Tai family.⁸⁴

80. *JAOS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 70.

81. "The accomplished T'ang banished Kieh to Southern Tsau"—The *Shu King*, trans. by Walter Gorn Old, 1904, p. 77. T'ang banished Hia's Ruler (Kieh-Kwei) to Nan-tsau, the modern Ngan-hwi on the Yang-tse-Kiang. -See translator's Note. *op.cit.*, p. 83.

82. Wood : *History of Siam*, 1933, p. 31.

83. W.D. Reeve : *Public Administration in Siam*, (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London & New York), 1951, p. 7.

84. Cushing : *op.cit.*, Introduction, p.1.

He further says that the Siamese form the southern half and the Laos the northern half of the kingdom of Siam. According to H.R.H. Prince Damrong "Lao" is a nickname used as a contraction of the word Lawa or Lwa.⁸⁵ Briggs says that the use of Lao is now specifically applied to a Tai people, called Laotians by the French. He further says that recently an attempt has been made to extend the appellation Lao to the Lawas, who are quite a different people.⁸⁶ The Lawas are one of the darker races, but the pure Laos (Tai) are fair.⁸⁷ Here it is important to note Hallett's investigation who points out that the Lewa, or Lawa, were the aboriginal inhabitants to the south of Yün-nān and were driven southward and into the hills by the Yun or Karens, who, on their part, had to move southward under Shan pressure.⁸⁸ This appears to be true as the Ngai-Laos and the Laos are undoubtedly Tai, whereas the Lawas are not. There is another Tai group called Lau who are found chiefly beyond the Cambodian river and are tributary to Siam. Yule locates them in Wintchian and Lantchian.

During the sixth century A.D. the Laos pushed eastward through North Siam to the south-west of Tongking and, during the three centuries that followed, established their kingdoms as far as Viengchan or Chandrapuri on the banks of the Mekong. It was also the time when the Yun-Shans occupying the country to the south of Kiang-Hung, founded the towns of Labong, Lagon, Phitsalok (Pitsanulok or Vishnulok), Kumpang (Kamp'engp'et i.e. Kamben Bejr or Vajra) and Sangkalok (Svargalok) in the basins of the Me-ping, Me-wang and Me-nam. Now the Laotians are an important section of the Tai that occupy the south-eastern region of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

In regard to the trend of migration of the Tai in Indo-China. Cushing observes : "It is probable that the earliest regions occupied by the Tai were in the upper part of Burma. The Siamese, who are the latest division to emigrate and settle in their present home, call themselves Htai Noi or Little Tai and name the Laos Htai Nici or Great Htai. The Laos, in turn, use the term Great Tai to designate the Shan communities

85. Credner : *Cultural and Geographical Observations made in Tali (Yunnan) Region with Special regard to the Nan-Chao Problem*, (Bangkok, 1934.), Translator's Comments, p. 19.

86. *JAOS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 63 ; Erick Seidenfaden : Anthropological and ethnological research work in Siam, *JSS*. 28. 1.15-8 (1935) ; W.A. Graham : *Siam*, 131-3 (2 vols : London, 1824).

87. *JAOS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 69.

88. *Historical Sketch of Shans*, in *Amongst the Shans*, pp. 338-39.

rather to the north. The appellation Tai Long, which is the equivalent of the Siamese Htai Niai, really belongs to the Shans of Northern Burma, and is accepted by them. This would seem to indicate that that region is recognised as the one occupied by that portion of the race which made the earliest migration.”⁸⁹

Rev. Dodd, who worked among the Laos and made a special study of that people, is of the opinion that the Tai-speaking race call themselves Lao from the earliest times. For the word ‘Lao’ in their language originally meant ‘man’ or ‘person’. Dodd discovered its use in this archaic sense during his journey amongst the illiterate Tai in China, who use many words in a sense lost or discredited among their literate brethren. He also refers to Colonel Gerini, a great authority on the Siamese language and race, who wrote in the *Asiatic Quarterly* that “their racial name was Lao or Ai-Lao, for which they soon substituted the title not name of Tai’. Enough authentic material is not available for the confirmation of this view. The northern Tai, including the Ahoms of Assam, call themselves Tai and not Lao in their Chronicles. Gerini also points out that the term ‘Ai’ in the compound Ai-Lao is the Tai word for ‘male’, whence Ai-Lao means “male Lao” as well as “The Lao” (men or people).

The ancient home of the Laos was in the eastern part of Central China to the north of the Yang-tse-Kiang occupying most of the region extending from Sze-chuan to An-hui. E. Seidenfaden is of the opinion that the southern Thai wrongly give the name Lao to the northern and north-eastern Thai people of Siam, for the word Lao or Ai-Lao probably denoted not the race but the region from which these Thai people came.⁹⁰ This view deserves attention and, if supported by ancient geography of the region, will solve a puzzling question arising from the multiplicity of names of the race. Mr. E. H. Parker, quoting chiefly the Annals of the Chinese T'ang dynasty, points out that “the Annamese still call the Laos of Upper Siam by the name of Ai-Lao”,⁹¹ He further says that Ai-Laos were next called Nan-Chao when they reappeared upon the Chinese political stage.⁹² That Nan-Chao was Tai no body disputes. “Chao”, according to the Chinese, is a barbarian word for “Prince”. It means “Prince” in Siamese, Shan, Lao and Ahom.

89. *Op.cit.*, Introduction, p. 2. See also his “Note on the Shans (Tai) in Burma” in the *Report on the Census of Burma* by H.L. Eales, 1892, pp. 200-201.

90. Credner's *Monograph Cultural and Geographical Observations made in the Tali (Yunnan) Region with Special Regard to the Nan-Chao Problem*, (Bangkok, 1935): Translator's Comments, p. 19.

91. Scott : *Burma and Beyond*, (London, 1932), p. 208.

92. GUBSS. 1.1. p. 260.

The geographical distribution of the Lao people in the region from North Siam to Yün-nān also connects the Lao of Siam with the Ai-Lao of Yün-nān as one people. It seems a branch of the Tai that lived in the area of the Lao Shan (i.e. Lao Mountain) at the intersection of Honan, Hupeh and Nganhuy (An-hui) provinces, acquired the name of Lao or Ai-Lao. These Lao people gradually extended their habitat to the Kiu-lung range forming the boundaries of Shen-si and Sze-Chuan provinces." Perhaps it was in this area that the Chinese imperialists, during their period of political expansion' first discovered this race towards the last Quarter of the third century B.C. and recorded their relations with these people, from which T. de Lacouperie came to the conclusion that "the cradle of the Shan (Tai) race was in the Kiu-lung mountains", as noted above. The Laos, in their turn, had many sub-groups, such as Shen-Lao, Ko-Lao, Do-Lao, etc. These Ai-Laos (Ngai-Laos) also emerged as a ruling race in the first century of the Christian era in Yün-nān with their centre at Mt. Lao about which more would be said in the next chapter.

The Thos and Muongs :

Among the other groups of the Tai the Thos and Muongs of the eastern part of Indo-China are important. The Thos⁹⁴ are mostly found to inhabit the region to the east of the Red River in Tongking and also Kwang-si in China. The word Tho is probably a local variant of "Dai" or "Doi" of Professor Coedés. They now mostly occupy the hilly areas but were the early inhabitants of Kwang-si, southern Kwei-Chow and eastern Yün-nān. The Muongs (or Mungs) of Tongking occupy the region to the west of the Red River and are presumed to be an offshoot of the great Mung (Tai) community of China. The Thos and Muongs speak a Tai dialect which is very much altered by the influence of the Chinese and Annamese languages." The Tai population of this area (N.W. Viet Nam) is now over two-hundred thousand.

The Pang :

A section of the Tai, the Pang, had been flourishing in central China even from before the foundation of the ancient Shang (or In) dynasty. The Pang were called Ngao (or Yao), the great or powerful. They later

93. T. de Lacouperie : *op.cit.*, p. lii.

94. The Thos are sub-brachy-cephalic of lofty stature having elongated face, straight non-Mongoloid eyes and brownish complexion. They are husbandmen, living in houses built on piles and wearing a very picturesque costume. -Denikar : *op.cit.*, pp. 400-402.

95. *Ibid*, pp. 400-402.

became the ruling race in the powerful State of Ch'u (or T'su), a great rival of Ch'in (T'sin). They are mentioned in the ancient Chinese Annals. Confucius speaks of "Our old Pang"⁹⁶ and in other records there appears "the Patriarch Pang", who ruled for an unusually long time. While Pang is the form of the name of "the Patriarch Pang", the founder of the dynasty Pan-hu is the name by which the later Chinese have heard of him among his descendants, in the province of Hunan, where the latter have more or less diverged from their original type. Some two thousand years before Christ the Pang were ruling in Central China in the area immediately to the north of Sze-chuan and Hupeh as contemporary of the Hsia, but their sovereignty was destroyed by Shang Wu-ting in 1231 B.C. after it had existed for more than seven hundred years. The whole period of their sovereign rule was afterwards fabulously believed to be the lifetime of their first Chief, the Patriarch Pang.⁹⁷ "The Pang or Pan-hu race", says Rev. W.W. Cochrane, "once from Central China southward, were Tai".⁹⁸

The Pan-hu were an important element among the population of an ancient State of the Karens. The earlier name of the State was Teru but in the later period it was referred to as Tsu (or Tch'u). It developed from the eleventh century B.C. under the leadership of the Karens and at the end of the fourth century B.C. it developed into a vast empire comprising the major part of South China down to about the border of Burma and a considerable portion of Central China including the larger part of Honan. Its dominions touched the sea in the east with the States of Ngu and Yueh forming part of them. In size the Karen empire of Tsu (Ch'u) became equal, if not more, to the grand Chinese Confederation of the time and later to Ch'in, the most formidable rival of Tsu.⁹⁹ The Karens of Teru drove to the south the King tribes from around the Tung ting lake in Hunan between the Yang-tse-Kiang, the Han river and southern Hunan and conquered that part of the country. These tribes are represented by the modern Khyens (Hui or Shu) of Burma.¹⁰⁰ The Karens in large numbers—some 200,000 families—were expelled from South China via Yung-chang in Western Yün-nán to Burma in A.D. 778 by Ko-lo-fêng, the powerful king of Nan-Chao, when he destroyed the western part of the Tsuan State in northern Kwang-si, Kihlao or Kihou tribes

96. Lun-yu, VII, 1.

97. T. de Lacouperie : *op.cit.*, xliv-xlv.

98. Milne and Cochrane : *Shans at Home*, (London, 1910), p.3.

99. T. de Lacouperie : *op.cit.*, xlvii-xlviii ; Letourette : *op.cit.*, pp. 48, 51.

100. T. de Lacouperie : *Ibid.*, xlvii.

of Kwei-tchou, whose dialects have a great affinity with those of the Karens of Burma¹⁰¹.

Being driven from Central China, the Pang rulers consolidated their power in the South in the mountainous region of the Province of Hunan between the Yuan and the Wu rivers and to the west and south-west of Tung-ting lake. This part of the country was highly favourable to gratify their hatred of the Shang by whom they had been dislodged from their earlier seat in the north. They retaliated by rallying the Chou and helping them to overthrow the decaying Shang dynasty.

Who were the Chou ? The Chou dynasty sprang from Chou, a principality in central Shen-si in the valley of the Wei, on the western frontier of the then China. The Chou supremacy (Circ. 1122-249 B.C.) in China, though disturbed by constant warfare, marked an epoch of great cultural progress, which, towards the close of the Chou rule, resulted in a synthesis of different cultures, Chinese and non-Chinese, that had existed side by side among the races living round the central seat of Chou civilization. According to Eberhard the results of recent researches indicate that the Chou (as distinguished from Chao, a Tai people) were originally a Turkish tribe with their small realm with Turkish and Tibetan populations.¹⁰² The Chou culture was closely related to that of Yang Chao. But the Chou had bronze weapons and war-chariots. Owing to repeated, 'barbarian' incursions the Chou capital had to be transferred during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. from the Wei valley to Loyang, near the present Honan-fu, in the east. The Eastern Chou, possibly because of comparative security and peace, made a great progress in arts and philosophy which is comparable to that of the Greeks of the age of Plato and Aristotle. It was at this time that the "Chinese" language took its form and the 'Chinese society', properly so called, was born in which the conquerors formed the ruling aristocracy and the conquered population, the working classes with the peasantry, formed the most numerous and important group. All the changes that followed in the later periods were the results of internal development rather than of external influence.

In the seventh century B.C. the China of the Eastern Chou split up into five contending feudal States, which were Ch'i in the North-east in parts of Shantung and Hopei, Chin in the North in modern Shansi, Ch'in (Ts'in) in the West in modern Shensi, Sung on the central plain and Ch'u (T'su) in Hupeh in the South. These States entered into a

101. *Ibid*, xlvii and xlviii.

102. W. Eberhard : *op.cit.*, p. 25.

long-drawn war of attrition each fighting for establishing its own supremacy over the others with temporary hegemony of one State or the other. After a prolonged struggle Ch'in¹⁰³ and Ch'u¹⁰⁴ survived as rivals, the former establishing its dominance over the States of the North and the latter expanding in the South. In the fourth century B.C. Ch'in annexed Shu in Western Sze-Chuan and Ch'in forces successfully crossed the Yang-tse-Kiang in 279 B.C. occupying a belt of territory in the South. Thus the struggle between Ch'in and Ch'u, the two giant States with their satellites joining this side or that in their shifting alliance, resulted ultimately in the destruction of Ch'u in 224 B.C. The fall of the strong rival made it easier for the Chinese imperialism to grow with rapid strides. The victory of the Ch'in over Ch'u was mainly due to the organizational superiority of the Ch'in army. It had been reformed on new lines largely replacing the traditional chariot by cavalry and foot soldiers.

In this connection it may be pointed out that the essentially Karen State of Teru was later transformed into a predominantly Tai State with the flower of the Pang or Pan-hu race constituting its hard core and refusing doggedly to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Chinese.¹⁰⁵ They not only put up a stubborn resistance to the aggressive policy of expansion of the northern power, but also progressively extended their territories by subjugating a score of other neighbouring States in the south. The dominion of the Ch'u State even extended beyond Yünnän to northern

103. The Ch'in (Ts'in) State was originally a small territory in the province of Kan-su. The eighth Emperor, Heaw-Wang (909-895 B.C.) of Western Chou, in the second year of his reign, assigned to Fei-Tse, a scion of a family of cattle breeders, who earned a reputation of being an excellent trainer of horses for chariot regiments, the territory of Ch'in to be held as a vassal State. Thus the Ch'in State first appeared in 908 B.C. in Kan-su with Fei-Tse as its first prince. Li-Wang, the tenth Emperor (878-879 B.C.) added to the State of Ch'in more than half of Shen-si. With this acquisition of new territory Ch'in rapidly developed into a powerful State and ranked among the twelve powerful feudal States of the time. In 249 B.C. Ch'in flourished as a unified empire with thirty-six great Divisions; each ruled by a prince. In that year the thirty-sixth prince of Ch'in founded the Ch'in Dynasty and reigned under the title of Shih-Wang-Ti and the country since then has been known to the world as China.—Hoontrakul : *op.cit.*, pp. 22,38-39 : James Legge : *Chinese Classics*, vol. V, Part I, Clause xiv, 'The Princes of Tain, pp. 110-11. A great part of the population of Ch'in, including the ruling class, was not purely Chinese but contained an admixture of Turks and Tibetans. The Chinese writers even dubbed Ch'in as a "barbarian State". Yet the name China has been derived from Ch'in with which the non-Chinese peoples from Central Asia first came into contact and called the country, conquered by Ch'in, China which became Sinae in Latin.

104. Ch'u (Tsu, Tch'u or Tso) "appears to have been almost entirely non-Chinese in race, originally non-Chinese in speech, and partly so in culture" Latourette : *op.cit.*, p. 47 According to T. de Lacouperie "it developed itself from the eleventh century B.C. under the influence of a branch of an intrusive race, the Karen" In the early part of its development it was known as Tero or Teru, Ch'u being the modern name—T. de Lacouperie : *op.cit.*, xlvii

105. Cochrane in Milne and Cochrane : *op.cit.*, p. 5

Burma and included what was then called the Tien or Tsen (Hsen) kingdom, which was destined to become the third great seat of power for the Tai after Ch'u. The first invasion of Burma by the Tarôks from the north-east in the sixth century B. C. might well have been an event forming an integral part of the political expansion of Ch'u from the seventh century B.C.

The fall of Ch'u led to the consolidation of Tai power farther south in the region of Tien or Tsen (Hsen), and also the first establishment of Tai principalities, such as Hsen-Wi and Hsi-Paw, in Upper Burma in the first half of the fifth century B.C. was a sequel to the conquests of Ch'u. The early Tien or Tsen has possibly survived to this day in the name Hsen-Wi, which has always been the historic abode of the Tai (Shan) people and an ancient centre of their power and culture.

The Chinese Empire,¹⁰⁶ founded by Shih-Wang-Ti¹⁰⁷ (249-210 B.C.), included large tracts of country south of the Yang-tse-Kiang, but the Chinese authority could not always be effectively exercised over the southern territories because of their distance from the capital and the violently rebellious spirit of the 'southern barbarians' who were generally Tai. Under Shi-Wang-Ti's ruthless policy of expansion the Tai suffered untold miseries, particularly those in the Tai State of Loin Hunan, and Tai scholarship met with virtual extinction. He suppressed confucianism and caused indiscriminately men of letters to be buried alive and the valuable ancient writings destroyed. He abolished the old feudal system.

106 The name Ch'in or Ts'in had found its mention, according to many oriental scholars, in the form of *China* in the laws of Manu, in the *Mahābhārata* and in Kautilya's *Arthasātra* before the foundation of the 'Chinese Empire'. Later the foreign travellers, who visited China, spread reports of the wealth and extent of the country which was variously designated as Sin, Chin, Sinae, China, Seres (silk), and subsequently Cathay (from *Kitai*, corrupted from the tribal name K'itan Tartars). It is supposed that "Sinim" of Isaiah refers to the same country. Ptolemy speaks of Sinae and Chinae. Sir R. K. Douglas suggests that Arab travellers, who are destitute of the sound of *Ch*, pronounce as Sinae. The author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* writes of *Thin*. See Sir Robert K. Douglas : *Europe and the Far East*, (Cambridge University, 1904), pp 2-3

107 Shih-Wang-Ti, often written as Shih-Hwang-Ti or Shih-Huang-Ti, occupied the thirty-sixth place in succession in the list of Princes of Ch'in State. He overthrew the Chou dynasty and united the different divisions of the Empire under his sway. He founded the Ch'in dynasty with his capital at Hsien-Yang in Shen-si. He abolished the old Feudal System and reorganized the Empire with thirty-six territorial divisions or Provinces with a Prefect in each. *Wang* means Emperor and *Ti* also means Emperor. He claimed that his own virtues were comparable to *San Wang*, that is, China's three mythical Emperors, who were Divine Emperors and his services were equal to Wu-Ti, the five virtuous Emperors, namely, 1. Hwang-Ti (Circ 2697-2596 B.C.), 2. Tuan-Yok (Circ 2512-2435 B.C.), 3. Yao (Circ 2357-2256 B.C.), 4. Shun (Circ. 2255-2206 B.C.) and 5. Yu (Circ. 2205-2198 B.C.). Hence he called himself both *Wang* and *Ti*.—Hoontrakul : *op.cit.*, p. 56.

One of the reasons given by scholars for his action against the ancient literature and the men of letters of his time was that they supported the feudal ideas. Whatever may be the reason, the Tai scholars and their writings suffered irreparable loss at the hands of the Emperor, who wanted to suppress ideas by suppressing literatures and writers.

Great masses of Tai population, as also other barbarian groups, fled from their homes in Hunan and the neighbouring provinces to escape the oppressions of the Emperor, some taking shelter in the hills and others migrating to distant countries in the south. Those, who refused to leave their hearth and home, were always waiting for opportunities to throw off the Chinese yoke. The Han (206 B.C. - A.D. 264) extended their suzerainty of a nominal character over Yün-nān and Kwang-si, but it was costly to maintain it. Rebellions were of frequent occurrence in those parts of the Empire, to quell which there was almost incessant fighting, at times, with heavy losses and defeats for the Imperialists. For the maintenance of political stability, however weak, in the southern frontier regions of the Empire, to which the Tai had been pressed, the Chinese government had to recognise the indigenous Chiefs and confer on them Chinese titles of office and seals in addition to their native dignity. For instance, in the latter part of the fifth century A.D. a Tai potentate of the Pan-hu race was recognized as the king of Siang-Yang in Hupeh and Governor of Kingtchou (in Southern Hupeh) by the Emperor of China. His realm, containing about 80,000 villages, covered the provinces of Central China and extended northwards to the neighbourhood of the Yellow River.¹⁰⁸ Professor Terrien de Lacouperie, from his penetrating study of the development of early Chinese polity, rightly observes that "under the cover of Chinese titles and geographical names' large regions occupied by populations entirely non-Chinese were included as homogeneous parts of the nation, with the effect of concealing the real weakness of the Chinese Empire previous to the last few centuries".¹⁰⁹ Thus the greatness of China is not all Chinese; it can be equally claimed by other ancient races, such as the Turks, the Karens and the Tai that had lived in that vast sub-continent in the past and developed their cultures and civilization.

108. Cochrane in Milne and Cochrane : *op.cit.*, p. 5.

109. T. de Lacouperic : *op.cit.*, xxxiii.