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The Northern Tai Polity of Lan Na (Babai-Dadian) Between the Late 13th to Mid-16th Centuries: Internal Dynamics and Relations with Her Neighbours

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The Northern Tai Polity of Lan Na (Babai-Dadian) Between the Late 13th to Mid-16th Centuries: Internal Dynamics and Relations with Her Neighbours*

Volker Grabowsky

In this paper the writer seeks to analyse the rise, consolidation and fall of Lan Na, known in Ming sources as Babai-dadian, and to present Lan Na in the light of mainly the indigenous sources, many of which have not yet been published. It covers the period from the late 13th to the mid-16th centuries. Due to its geographical position, located in the heartland of mainland Southeast Asia, this northern Tai polity emerged to play a major role in the regional power structure of the 15th century when Lan Na had reached the zenith of its civilisation. Burma, Siam (Ayutthaya) and Ming China were the major external powers, whose influences the Lan Na kingdom was exposed to. Though Lan Na had become a part of the Chinese *tusi* (“Aboriginal Pacification Commissions”) system since the early 14th century and was obliged to send regularly tribute missions to the Yuan and Ming courts, direct Chinese influence on the whole remained marginal. The first part of the paper will examine political developments during the period under review, both with regards to relations with neighbouring powers and internal structures. The second part analyses social, economic and demographic factors.

1. General Setting

Lan Na, the land of a “million rice fields”,¹ comprises — in the narrow sense — the eight provinces of today’s Northern Thailand, namely Chiang Mai, Lamphun,

* The author wishes to thank his colleague Dr Foon Ming Liew for having translated the key Chinese sources for him, which otherwise would have been inaccessible, and for her many thoughtful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

¹ Until the end of the 1970s a spelling (in Siamese scripts) of a toponym was predominantly without using the tone marker *mai tho* (๓). Not only in the popular scientific literature but also in academic works ลานนา was preferred to ล้านนา. The variant ลานนา was also accepted after Lan Na had been incorporated into the Siamese state by the end of the 19th century. It is obviously based on a misinterpretation of the Siamese word ลาน because this lexeme is only used in Siamese, namely in the meaning of “even surface” (viz.: ลานนา = “an open area of rice fields”); however, it does not exist in Northern Thai. Indeed the variations variant ลานนา are is by no means unknown in the written literary tradition of Northern Thailand — they appear according to own/one’s the author’s observations even more often than ล้านนา — , however this accepted fact is hardly relevant to the semantic meaning of the toponym because the tone marks in Northern Thai the tone markers *mai sat* (๔) and *mai khom* (๕) are often used arbitrarily and frequently often not inserted at all. A Pāli manuscript in Pali from the second half of the 19th century called calls Chiang Mai *dasa lakkha khetta nagara* (ทศลक्षเขตตนคร), which means “city which rules ten times one million rice fields”. The meaning of Lan Na as “one million rice fields” is therefore manifested in contemporary record. The more convincing evidences are the epigraphic materials, which clearly proved the spelling ล้านนา. On the meaning of the toponym of Lan Na see RISPAUD 1937: 79–81, PENTH 1980 and — recent — SOMCHOT 1987. It is not known how the meaning of “Lan Na” was developed, who has coined it and since when the Yuan have used it as the name of their country. Probably there is a connection between the toponym Lan Na (“one million rice fields”) and the administrative system of *panna* (“thousand rice fields”) that was used/implemented in Northern Thailand under Mangrai Dynasty (1296–1558), as SOMCHOT (1987: 9) has suspected. Perhaps [the geographic name] Lan Na was already generally employed under the reign of King Kü Na (r. 1355–1385) for the name of the sovereign literally means “one hundred million (kü คือ) rice fields (นา นา)”. See UDOM 1991: 86.

Lampang, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, and Mae Hông Sòn. More than 80% of the population of Northern Thailand belong to a Tai ethnic group called (Tai) Yuan, making up almost five million people. They represent the majority of the population of all the above mentioned provinces, except for the thinly populated mountainous province of Mae Hông Sòn in the western region where the Shan (Tai Yai), Karen and other hill tribes are predominant. The Yuan also live in the northern parts of the provinces of Tak, Uttaradit, and Kamphaeng Phet, as well as in enclaves in the central Thai provinces Saraburi, Ratburi and in northwestern Laos.

The Yuan are differentiated from other Tai peoples by their own language and script, which is distinct from that of the Siamese. The presence of the Yuan people in the territory of today's Northern Thailand prior to the mid-11th century is not confirmed by historical sources. The ethnonym "Yuan" (ยวน) is not a genuine native ethnic name referring to the Tai speaking population of Lan Na, but was originally a Siamese term for her northern neighbour.² The term *yuan*, just like *yun*, is the Burmese name for the Northern Thai still in use; the Pāli form *yonaka* (re-converted into Thai as *yonok* โยนก) can be traced back to the Sanskrit word *yavana* ("foreigner"). This word was first used by the Indians to refer to the Greek ("Ionians"), and was later also used for other foreign peoples such as the Persians and the Romans.³ As for whether the name Yuan/Yun was first employed by the Siamese or by the Burmese is uncertain. Since the end of the 18th century, the ethnonym *khon müang* (คนเมือง "inhabitants of the [cultivated] land") has appeared in Northern Thai manuscripts.⁴

Ethnically related to the Yuan are the Khün and the Lü, inhabiting in particular the regions of Chiang Tung and Sipsòng Panna respectively. Their languages are so similar to that of the Yuan that Chamberlain and Egerød classify them as "sister languages" under the rubric "Northern Thai".⁵ Moreover, due to the close cultural, historical and the dynastic relationships of the Khün and Lü with the Yuan, one can consider the "cultural region of the Yuan, Khün, and Lü"⁶ as one large entity; thus the region east of the Salween river, including Sipsòng Panna, can be viewed as part of Lan Na in a broader perspective. Depending on the context, I would use the toponym Lan Na either in this broader field of meaning or in a narrower sense to refer to the eight northern provinces of the kingdom of Thailand — like present-day Thai scholars usually do.

² In the famous poem *Lilit yuan phai* ลิลิตยวนพ่าย ("Poem on the defeat of the Yuan"), which most probably dates from the early 16th century, and describes the armed struggle between the kings Bòrommatrailokat of Ayutthaya and Tilokarat of Lan Na for the hegemony over the region Sukhothai-Phitsanulok in the second half of the 15th century. See GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1976.

³ See MONIER-WILLIAMS 1899: 848.

⁴ The rendering as "urban human beings" or "city dwellers" is however not entirely correct because the term *müang* refers not only to urban centres but also to the surrounding villages and eventually comprises the country as a whole. Depending on the specific context a *müang* can signify a "town/city", "principality" or the whole country (notably the river plains, not the forests and mountainous regions). So it is the inhabitants of the cultivated regions of the settlements in Northern Thailand, the cities/towns as well as the villages, to which the label *khon müang* belong. Thus *khon müang* represents a contrast to the uncivilised "hill people" (*khon dòi* คนดอย) or "forest people" (*khon pa* คนป่า).

⁵ CHAMBERLAIN 1975; EGEROD 1961: 49.

⁶ In Thai: *Khet watthanatham yuan khün lü* (เขตวัฒนธรรมยวนขิ่นลือ). Today this region with an area of more than 150,000 km² has a population of six to seven million inhabitants.

The natural landscape of Lan Na is characterised by mountain ranges, which run mostly north-south. Three-quarters of the land is mountainous, whereas the remaining quarter consists of river plains; only here can wet rice, the staple food of the Yuan, be cultivated. The physical geography of Lan Na is marked by rivers, which either flow towards the north into the Mekong River (Kok, Ing, and Lao) or towards the south into the Cao Phraya river, coming either from the west (Ping and Wang rivers) or from the east (Yom and Nan rivers).⁷

The physical geographic fragmentations of the Lan Na territory prevented the formation of powerful kingdoms and centralised states. This fundamental characteristic of the political development of Northern Thailand will be elaborated in the course of this study. The river plains of the Kok and of the Ing in the north-east (Chiang Rai and Phayao), as well as of the Ping and Wang in the south-west (Chiang Mai, Lamphum, and Lampang), are of particular importance to the ethnogenesis of the Yuan and the historical development of Lan Na. A geographical orientation towards Sukhothai and Luang Prabang fostered a separate state formation in the south-east, in the plains of the Yom and Nan rivers (Phrae and Nan respectively).

The Lan Na kingdom emerged after the conquest of Hariphunchai by King Mangrai (1292) and the foundation of Chiang Rai as the new capital (1296). Lan Na existed as an independent polity until the Burmese conquest of Chiang Mai (1558), i.e., it survived over a period of two and a half centuries. In spite of considerable achievements gained through the research in Northern Thailand on the region's history, our knowledge of Lan Na's political and social structures is still rather poor and fragmented.

In his influential book *Thailand: A Short History*, the American historian David K. Wyatt called the 13th century the "Tai Century". Everywhere on the Southeast Asian mainland, polities ruled by Tai groups replaced the declining Khmer and Burmese empires. In the northern sectors of the Cao Phraya river basin Sukhothai, a former outpost of the Khmer empire of Angkor, emerged in the second quarter of the 13th century as the first independent Siamese polity. Under its third ruler Ram Khamhaeng (r. 1279?–1298), Sukhothai was at its zenith of power. A stone inscription, the authenticity of which has been a subject of controversy among scholars and which is attributed to this king, gives exaggerated borders for the Sukhothai kingdom, marking more the King's sphere of intervention (Kulke) than the confines of the kingdom proper.

In the mid-14th century, the kingdom of Ayutthaya emerged along the lower course of the Cao Phraya river, directly abutting to the weakening Khmer empire. Within three quarters of a century Ayutthaya succeeded in subduing her rival Sukhothai. By finally incorporating Sukhothai in 1438, Ayutthaya eventually became a direct neighbour and an immediate threat to Lan Na. Along with Ayutthaya's rise another Tai polity developed into the major power in the middle Mekong basin: the Lao kingdom of Lan Sang ("Million Elephants") with Luang Prabang (Müang Sua) as her political and religious centre. In the valley of the Salween river the Shan became a major political actor. In the course of the 14th century the Shan brought large parts of upper Burma under their control; the Shan federation of Moeng (Müang) Mao

⁷ The rivers Pai and Yuam in the sparsely populated province of Mae Hông Sòn take the course westwards and join the Salween which flows at Martaban into the Andaman Sea. Because of its peripheral location and the predominantly non-Yuan (f.e. the Shan and Karen) settlements the narrow valleys of the Pai and Yuam and the surrounding mountainous landscape have been first of all excluded in the geography of Northern Thailand.

extended its sphere of influence, and in the later period of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1280–1368) the territory under Shan control expanded deep into southwestern Yunnan.

During the last quarter of the 13th century the Mongols forced numerous “barbarian” peoples along the southern fringes of the Chinese empire into entering a tributary relationship by means of establishing the so-called *tusi* (“Aboriginal Pacification Commissions”).⁸ The Mongol efforts, undertaken in the years 1301–03, to transform also Lan Na — called Babai-xifu in contemporary Chinese sources, into a *tusi* failed due to stiff military resistance by troops under King Mangrai’s command and logistic problems of the Mongols. Ultimately, the Mongol court was satisfied with receiving in 1312/13 a tribute mission led by Mangrai’s son Zhao Santing (Cai Songkham). The Mongol Khan was presented with one albino elephant and several tame elephants as well as local products from Chiang Mai and Chiang Rung; the latter being a vassal of the former since 1296/97. The envoys from Babai (Chiang Mai) and Cheli (Chiang Rung) received coats made of fur and animal skin, shoes, and other textiles.⁹

Though Mangrai and his successors sent repeatedly tribute missions to China in the two following decades (in 1315, 1316, 1317, 1328, and 1329), it took several more years until, at the beginning of the Yuantong reign (1333–1335), Lan Na agreed to establish a so-called *xuanwei si* (“Pacification Commission”) at Chiang Saen (since 1328/29 the royal residence). This institution was also maintained after the collapse of Mongol power during the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368–1644). In the period 1406–1432 alone, eighteen tribute missions from Babai (Lan Na) arrived in China.¹⁰ Even though Lan Na was a vassal state from Chinese perspective, the (Tai) Yuan considered their polity an independent one: Northern Thai chronicles hardly report tribute missions to China. A notable exception is the mention in the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* of a tribute mission under King Tilok in 1479 or 1480. This mission was carried out not long after the brilliant victory of the Lan Na army against the Vietnamese who had invaded and occupied Laos. The chronicler, however, stresses that the Chinese emperor, highly delighted with the Lan Na victory, did not at all expect a tribute mission from the king of Lan Na whose most prestigious position among Southeast Asian rulers was recognised. The chronicle reports:

The Cao Lum Fa¹¹ (i.e., the Chinese emperor) said, ‘Over all the earth, none is braver than the king of Lan Na. None must look down on the king of Lan Na as [lord of] a small country. [...] Whatever tribute Lan Na sends is up to the kings of Lan Na, who maintain their brave troops for us.’ King Tilok thought, ‘The Cao Lum Fa will require no tribute from us. We should send tribute to him.’ So he sent four kinds of tribute: nine tusks of elephant ivory, nine pieces of Burmese cloth, nine pieces of Thai cloth, and nine rhinoceros horns.¹²

This account is consistent with what is recorded in the key Ming source, the *Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty (Ming Shilu)*:

⁸ On the *tusi* system see LIEW 1998 I, 63–68.

⁹ *Yuanshi jishi benmo* 6.36–37, LIEW n.d.: 11.

¹⁰ WINAI 1996: 111; WADE 1991.

¹¹ Cao Lum Fa (เจ้าลุ่มฟ้า), literally, “Lord of the globe”.

¹² Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT and AROONRUT 1995: 101. I am grateful to Dr Sun Laichen for having put my attention to this episode.

In the year Chenghua 16, 7th month, on xinchou day (August 1480), the aboriginal officials of the three Pacification Commissions—Cheli, Laowo, and Babai-dadian—in Yunnan, [viz.] the Pacification Commissioner [of Cheli], Dao San-bao (i.e., Tao Sam Pò Lütai), and others sent [their] headmen to pay tribute, offering utensils made of gold and silver, rhinoceros horns, ivory, and other items. All of them were conferred variegated satins and other things, in varying amount. In return the aboriginal officials and their wives were conferred embroidered brocades and variegated stains. During that time Laos was invaded and the Laotians were killed by Jiao people (Annam people). The Grand Defender, the palace eunuch Qian Neng reported the matter [to the court]. Moreover, he said that the tributary envoys sent by Laos, Babai, and Cheli should be given the appropriate travelling expenses so that they could return in double speed. The Ministry of War replied and ordered the Provincial Administration Commission of Yunnan to grant each of them (Laowo, Cheli, and Babai) twenty taels of silver from the government treasury.¹³

The Chinese in general held a favourable view of Lan Na, but friendly relations with this Tai kingdom were imperative because of geopolitical as well as economic deliberations. A Chinese source of the 19th century, based on earlier sources, reports:

The territory [of Babai] is extensive, the rivers and plains cover an area of several thousand *li* (one *li* is c. 0.5 km) wide. There are huge elephants and the local products are various kinds of sandalwoods, such as the white sandalwood of Anxi (ancient Persia). The natives belonging to the Bo tribes (or Baiyi) tattoo designs between their eyes and eyebrows. They are devoted Buddhists and dislike killing. In every village there is a temple and in every temple there is a pagoda, thus amounting to over ten thousand of them. They are forced to send troops against the enemies only when they are being attacked. They stop fighting when the enemies are destroyed. It is commonly known as the Land of Mercy.¹⁴

2. The Formation Period

Our knowledge of the early, formative years of the Lan Na polity is scarce due to the lack of reliable contemporary sources. The first major epigraphic evidence of early Lan Na history is the stone inscription of Wat Phra Yün, near Lamphun, dated 1370. The inscription recorded a list of the names of the kings, from Mangrai to Kü Na, that apparently contradicts that given in the genealogy of the Northern Thai chronicles, the earliest of which have been made in the late 15th century. The Wat Phra Yün inscription calls Kü Na the great-grandson (*len* เฒ่า) of Mangrai, whereas the tradition established by the chronicles sees him as the founding father's great-great-grandson. Moreover, the dating of important events, such as the ascension to the throne or the death of kings, is often contradictory in the two main chronicles, i.e., the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* and *Jinaḵlamāḷipakaraṇam*. In view of these contradictions and aberrations, Michael Vickery proposed almost thirty years ago to omit at least the first

¹³ *Xianzong Shilu* 205.3586 (Chenghua 16, 7th month, *xinchou*: Aug. 28, 1480). LIEW n.d.: 34.

¹⁴ *Xin Yuanshi* 252.12–13 (Babai-xifu), LIEW n.d.: 12. The *New History of the Yuan Dynasty*, edited by Ke Shaomin, a prominent scholar who passed the palace exam in 1886, was based on sources from earlier works. The work is meant to supplement the *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* (*Yuanshi*), ed. by Song Lian (1310–1381) and others in the 14th century.

two of Mangrai's immediate successors from the list of Lan Na kings.¹⁵ More recently, he sharpened his critique of traditional Lan Na historiography arguing, “the first one hundred years of Chiang Mai history, and its founder king *Mairāy*, whose very name has inspired complex folk etymologies, are fiction”.¹⁶ Already more than two decades ago, Chandrachiraya Rajani had convincingly argued for the existence of two different royal lines, one based in Chiang Mai and another ruled over the Chiang Saen-Chiang Rai region (see appendix).¹⁷ Moreover, not only Mangrai but also the first four successors, including Saen Phu, the founder of Chiang Saen, are mentioned in the extant inscriptions, such as an inscription on the pedestal of the Vajamariga hermit image dated 26 February 1605.¹⁸ The argument that this and other later inscriptions — for example, the inscription of Wat Chiang Man (dated 1581), which mentions Chiang Mai's horoscope — were all deliberately manipulated by ambitious rulers to turn fiction into facts,¹⁹ is obviously rather far-fetched. However, hitherto the historical records of the formative period of Lan Na are too scanty and fragmentary for us to pass any hasty and generalised judgements.

When Phaṅa Mangrai died in 1311 after being a king for half a century, he had built an extensive and powerful realm out of congeries of isolated Yuan *müang* in the Kok-Ing basin and the Mon-Lawa kingdom of Hariphunchai further to the south. He had gained influence among the Shan (Müang Nai) to the west, as well as Khün (Chiang Tung) to the northwest and the Lü (Sipsòng Panna) to the north.²⁰ The relationship between Chiang Mai and the *müang* of Lan Na's western and northern security belt was based on personal bonds between the king, Phaṅa Mangrai, and the rulers of those lesser principalities. Chiang Rung, the capital of Sipsòng Panna, was the birth-place of Mangrai's mother. Mangrai sent troops twice to help its ruler; Thao Ai, his second cousin, repulsed Mongol attacks (in 1296 and 1301).²¹ As to Chiang Tung, Mangrai became personally involved in its reconstruction, after it had been devastated by incessant warfare between the Khün and local Lawa people.²² In 1324, King Cai Songkham anticipated an uprising of his son Nam Thuam who was in charge of day-to-day administration in Chiang Mai. He handled the situation by exiling his son in order to govern the remote Chiang Tung. After Nam Thuam's death, his younger brother Nam Nan succeeded him.²³ From that time on the ruling houses

¹⁵ VICKERY 1976.

¹⁶ VICKERY 2003: 35.

¹⁷ CHANDRACHIRAYU 1981.

¹⁸ *Carük lan na, carük cangwat chiang rai nan phayao phrae* 1991: 16. This inscription originates from Chiang Saen and is now placed in the National Museum, Bangkok.

¹⁹ VICKERY (2003: 32, fn 115) argues that the Wat Chiang Man inscription “is no more reliable than chronicles for events far in the past”.

²⁰ The Khün and Lü are Thai speaking peoples closely related to the Yuan. They use a Mon-derived script (*tua müang*: “the letters of the *müang*”) which originally was written for religious purposes and thus sometimes called *tua tham* [“the letters of the *dharma*”]. The languages of these three peoples of Thai stock are mutually intelligible. The Shan, on the other side, belong to a different group as regards to language and other cultural features.

²¹ WYATT 1984a: 48–49.

²² The “Chiang Tung State Chronicle”, in: SĀIMÖNG 1981: 224–31.

²³ See CMC-TPCM 1971: 37; PY, PRACHAKITKÖRACAK 1973: 283; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 77. The Chiang Tung Chronicle reports that Mangrai sent his “son” (*luk*), Phaṅa Nam Thum [= Thuam]. But there is no corroborating evidence in any of the Northern Thai chronicles which agree on Nam Thuam as the son of Cai Songkham. As the Chiang Tung Chronicle confuses certain events and is also often inconsistent in its chronology, one should better follow, for instance, TPCM.

of Chiang Mai and Chiang Tung were tied up by close dynastic links (*rabop khriüayat*). In a very similar fashion that Phaña Mangrai had tightened his grip on the Shan. In order to ease tensions between his two sons Cai Songkham, the elder, and (Khun) Khrüa, the younger, Mangrai sent Khrüa to the Shan territory where he built a new and large *wiang* on the eastern side of the Salween: Müang Nai.²⁴

Mangrai had hardly begun building viable administrative and political institutions when he went beyond the strategy of sending his sons, close relatives or trusted officers out to govern the various *müang* in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun core area. By 1311, neither a tradition of central control from Chiang Mai nor firm rules that could ensure a smooth transition of power to Mangrai's heir were yet established.²⁵ Whether "The Judgements of King Mangrai" (*mangraisat*), a legal code probably derived from the Mon *dharmasāstra* via Hariphunchai, was created by Mangrai himself is still a point of debate.²⁶ However, the first steps to create such a system of laws regulating mundane affairs might have been initiated during Mangrai's reign.²⁷

At the beginning of the 14th century, Lan Na lacked not only solid socio-political institutions, but also ethnic homogeneity. The great majority of the population living in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun region, perhaps also in Lampang and Phrae, was either Mon or Lawa. In the Kok-Ing basin and further to the north, the ethnic Thai element was even stronger. However, this area was still inhabited by a substantial number of Mon-Khmer autochthones (i.e. Lawa, "Khom", "Milakkhu"). They controlled important overland trade routes and possibly contributed decisively to the defence of the northern fringes of Lan Na against the Mongols.²⁸ Later on, the Yuan

²⁴ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 55; CMC-TPCM 1971: 34; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 4–5; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 278. CMC-N, NOTTON (1932: 73) translates Müang Nai as "ville-maître".

²⁵ WYATT 1984a: 50.

²⁶ During the last three decades more than half a dozen of different versions of the *mangraisat* have been transliterated into modern Thai. Two versions are accessible in English translations. GEHAN Wijeyardene and ARONRUT Wichiankhiao 1986 published the *mangraithammasat*, a manuscript from Nan, both in modern Thai transliteration and in English translation.

Another manuscript of the *mangraisat* translated into English by A.B. GRISWOLD and PRASERT na Nagara 1977a: 146–159 is from Wat Sao Hai Saraburi. This manuscript is based on a copy from Wat Sap Lopburi, with a date equivalent to A.D. 1800, long prior to its supposed composition. Griswold and Prasert suppose in their introduction (pp. 137–55) that the text was copied for the use of a local Lopburi population of Lan Na war captives who had settled in that region during Ayutthayan times and required their own customs for the regulation of their life.

David K. WYATT 1984b: 247 stresses that the original manuscript includes more than 200 articles, but Griswold and Prasert translated only the first 22 articles which, for various reasons, they believe to be much older than the rest of the codes. However, WYATT 1984a: 50, may be incorrect in his suggestion that the original spirit of the *mangraisat* is "nicely represented" in the assertion of article 14 that "according to the ancients, the king can maintain his kingdom only with the help of the citizens. Citizens are rare and should not be vested [by allowing them to become slaves]." GRISWOLD and PRASERT (1977a: 153, fn 34) doubt whether this statement derives from the Mangrai period for it "sounds as if it dated from a period when the country had been devastated by prolonged warfare. In such conditions many impoverished citizens might become slaves voluntarily in order to get enough to eat. As a result there might not be enough citizens left to supply the needs of the military or the corvée."

²⁷ See GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1977a 143–44.

²⁸ The Mongol threat probably formed the background of the following tale reported by "Tamnan Suwanna Kham Daeng rü Tamnan Sao Inthakhin". Demons (*phi*) from *khok fa* attacked the Tai killing them in large numbers. The Lawa came in support of the distressed Thai by proposing to the Tai to cut their hair in the Lawa style. The Lawa in turn would dress in the Thai manner. Thus

rulers of Chiang Mai exempted the Lawa from paying certain taxes and contributions to the state. They also obtained both economic and ritual privileges which they enjoyed until the early Bangkok period.²⁹

The stability and coherence of Lan Na depended very much on the outstanding leadership of Phaña Mangrai who was able to hold together divisive, centrifugal forces. As a “man of prowess” Mangrai resembled Ram Khamhaeng of Sukhothai, his contemporary and ally. The famous Ram Khamhaeng inscription claims that even Wiang Can, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Martaban recognised the superiority of the king,³⁰ “the sovereign over all the Dai.”³¹ After Ram Khamhaeng’s death (1298) his empire rapidly disintegrated. Under his son Loe Thai (r. 1298–1346/47) Sukhothai’s borders shrunk to a radius of c. 150 km of the capital.³² Developments in Lan Na likewise became troublesome when its powerful ruler passed away (1311). Unity faded and centripetal tendencies gained momentum. Several *müang* in the Shan States and Sipsòng Panna no longer recognised the suzerainty of Lan Na and stopped sending tribute to Chiang Mai.³³ Even the leading role of Chiang Mai itself was called into question, when Mangrai’s second son and successor, Cai Songkham³⁴, took up residence in Chiang Rai and left Chiang Mai to his eldest son Saen Phu.³⁵

Although events in the first half of the 14th century, as reported by the chronicles, are often confusing, it seems that Lan Na had broken up between 1311 and 1340 into two contending power centres,³⁶ i.e. Chiang Mai-Lamphun and Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen. As to the main reasons for this schism, I would like to offer two. Firstly, the threat of Mongol invasions from the North had eased in the first half of the 14th century. Therefore, from a security-centred perspective, the strategic importance of Chiang Mai had declined.³⁷ Secondly, in spite of efforts to assimilate elements of Hariphunchai civilisation, like Theravada Buddhism and the Mon writing system, into Yuan culture, the Chiang Mai-Lamphun region still remained alien to large segments of the Yuan gentry.³⁸

the demons would no longer be able to distinguish Tai and Lawa and stop harassing the Thai. See TSKD-TSI, in: SANGUAN 1972: 145; see also CMC-N, NOTTON 1926: 21.

²⁹ For details see CHONTHIRA Sattayawatthana 1987: 186–88.

³⁰ GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1971b: 218.

³¹ Quoted after *ibid.*; the original Thai text reads “*pen thao pen phaya kae thai thanglai*” *ibid.*: 202). The ranks of *thao* and *phaya* translated by Griswold and Prasert as “sovereign” do not necessarily refer to a sovereign in the modern sense, but rather to a powerful man recognised by minor chiefs as their superior.

³² As to the exact borders of Sukhothai after Ram Khamhaeng’s death see NAKHÒN 1985: 17.

³³ USANEE 1988: 12.

³⁴ Mangrai had sent him to govern Chiang Rai when he was still the heir apparent. His original name was Khram. He got the honorific name Chai Songkhram [= victory in war] because of his decisive victory over Phaña Yiba of Lamphun and Phaña Boek of Lampang.

³⁵ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 54; CMC-TPCM 1971: 35; JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 114.

³⁶ For details see CHANDRACHIRAYU 1977: 287–290; Chandrachirayu suggests that there were not only two power centres but two contending lines of Mangrai’s descendants. According to him, King Pha Yu (r. 1336–1355) who succeeded King Kham Fu (r. 1334–1336) was not the latter’s son, but his nephew, a descendant of the so-called “Chiang Mai line”.

³⁷ WYATT 1984a: 50. Although the immediate danger of a Mongol invasion had eased after 1301, Lan Na sent two tribute missions to China after that year, in 1312 and 1315 respectively. See USANI Thongchai 1988: 10.

³⁸ The transfer of the Burmese capital from Pegu back to Ava in 1635 might have been based upon similar considerations. One reason for moving the capital of Unified Burma in 1551 to Pegu had been King Bayinnaung’s desire to reconcile the conquered Mon population of Lower Burma with

Around 1327 Phaña Saen Phu founded a new walled city (*wiang*) on the western bank of the Mae Khong some 50 km northeast of Chiang Rai, where he resided then.³⁹ Chiang Saen [“the royal city of Saen Phu”]⁴⁰ became the king’s new residence. The city, situated nearby the ruins of old Ngoen Yang, was 700 *wa* [1,400 m] in wide and 1 500 *wa* [3,000 m] long. The Mae Khong formed one of the four sides of the city moat.⁴¹ Thus, *wiang* Chiang Saen was of the same size as Chiang Mai within its outer, circular wall.

The chronicles describe the territories attached to Chiang Saen by the small mountains (*dòì*) and rivers (*mae nam*) that separate the *müang* from the neighbouring *müang* of Chiang Rai, Fang, Sat, Chiang Tung, Chiang Rung and Chiang Khòng.⁴² As to the status of Chiang Saen during the thirteen years (1327–1339) it was the royal residence, the chronicles do not provide convincing answers. I doubt whether Chiang Saen had actually replaced, even temporarily, Chiang Mai as the capital of Lan Na, for the latter remained the ritual centre of the country. Chiang Rai was administered separately from Chiang Saen, perhaps because of its symbolic significance as the cradle of Mangrai’s kingdom. The territory directly administered by Chiang Saen comprised only the northern section of the Kok-Ing basin, as it was bordered by Chiang Rai in the south and Chiang Khòng in the southeast. In the north the territory of Chiang Saen did not extend much beyond the Mekong river and the (iron) mines (*bò hae*).

Table 1: Borders of Chiang Saen (c. 1330)

direction	bordering <i>müang</i>	border town/- river/- mountain	Siamese transcription
South	Chiang Rai	Mae Toem	แม่เดิม
Southwest	Fang	Dòì Kiu Khò Ma	ดอยกั่วคหมา
West	Müang Sat	Pha Ta Lao	ผาดาแหลว
Northwest	Chiang Tung	Moeng Hai Dòì Cang	เมืองไรดอยช้าง
North	Chiang Tung	Moeng Kai Sam Tao	เมืองกาย3ท้าว
Northeast:	China [Chiang Rung]	Moeng Luang Bò Hae	เมืองหลวงบ่อห้ำ
East	Chiang Khòng	Dòì Ciang Cü	ดอยเชียงซ้อ
Southeast	Chiang Khòng	Kio Wang Wai Nòng Ngua	ก๊ววางหวายหนองงั่ว

Source: SRI 81 060 05 038–038: “Lamdap latcakun wongsa nai müang lan na”, ff° 6/3–7/1.

his poly-ethnic, yet predominantly Burmese empire. However, this wise decision did not last. Bayinnaung’s successors probably felt that in the long run Ava, which was situated in the Burmese heartland of Upper Burma, would be the better choice for a Burmese king. For further details see LIEBERMAN 1980.

³⁹ The year of the founding of Chiang Saen is 1327 according to JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 115), and CMC-TPCM 1971: 37. CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 78 writes: “Suivant une chronique, il est dit qu’elle fut fondée en l’année Müang Mao, 689 de l’ère (A.D. 1327), et, d’après une autre, en l’année Peuk [Poek Si], 690 de l’ère (A.D. 1328).” PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 284) accepts 1328 as the year of founding.

⁴⁰ In analogy, Chiang Rai has to be translated “the royal) city of Mangrai”.

⁴¹ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 58; CMC-TPCM 1971: 38.

⁴² CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 59; CMC-TPCM 1971: 38; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 78; PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 284–85.

For a regional centre, however, Chiang Saen was an ideal place, certainly better suited than Chiang Rai. Situated on one of the numerous bends of the Mae Khong, both the Kok-Ing basin and areas further to the north could easily be controlled via Chiang Saen. The city was an important trading and commercial centre, too. The economic importance of Chiang Saen as a regional trading centre with links river upstream to Yunnan and river downstream to Laos, was growing. The eminence of Chiang Saen which was a result, rather than a cause, of the shift of political power back into the Kok-Ing basin. This is illustrated by the following episode of the Chiang Mai Chronicle.

By the end of Phaña Kham Fu's reign (1325–1336), the king asked the ruler of Nan to help him attack and destroy the independent principality of Phayao. After the conquest, Kham Fu refused to divide the war booty with his partner. The whole of Phayao should become part of Lan Na. To make things worse, Kham Fu tried to put pressure on the ruler of Nan who insisted on having his share by closing all markets in Chiang Saen for traders from Nan.⁴³ Chiang Saen was obviously an important entrepôt, at least for Nan which faced serious consequences from the economic sanctions forced upon it by Kham Fu. War broke out between Lan Na and Nan; after initial successes it ended with the military defeat of Nan. However, Nan was not decisively weakened, and although the chronicle is silent on this matter, the economic sanctions against Nan were eventually lifted in exchange for recognition of Lan Na's claims on Phayao.

The middle Mae Khong basin undoubtedly prospered in the second quarter of the 14th century. Shortly after the incorporation of Phayao, King Kham Fu was befriended by Ngua Hong, an affluent merchant from Chiang Kham. The story of the friendship between the handsome, vigorous king and the ugly, but rich "bourgeois" is epic.⁴⁴ Moreover, it resembles the *khun chang khun phaen* topoi in classical Siamese literature. The story might be fictitious, invented probably to explain Kham Fu's mysterious death in the waters of the Mae Kham. But the episode demonstrates that close personal relations between the king and influential merchants were by no means considered unusual. One may doubt whether the royal friendship for Ngua Hong was genuine or primarily influenced by commercial interests, for the merchant's character is described as unpleasant. Perhaps, he was one of the financiers supporting royal enterprises.

After Kham Fu's death, his successor, Phaña Pha Yu left Chiang Saen in 1340 and took up residence at Chiang Mai.⁴⁵ Significant changes in the spheres of culture and politics took place during the reigns of Pha Yu and his son, Kün Na [Pāli: Kilana], who ruled Lan Na for three peaceful decades (1355 to 1385). Phaña Kün Na invited a monk, Sumanathera from Sukhothai, to help him establish in Lan Na an ascetic, scholarly Buddhist order of Singhalese origin, the Udumburagiri Order, a sect of forest-dwelling monks.

According to an inscription at Wat Phra Yün, situated about one km to the east of Lamphun city, Sumanathera and his followers set forth for Lan Na in 1369.⁴⁶ The

⁴³ CMC-TPCM 1971: 39; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 81. PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973 fails to mention this important measure.

⁴⁴ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 62–63; CMC-TPCM 1971: 40–41; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 82–84.

⁴⁵ JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 116.

⁴⁶ The inscription which is still in *situ* was composed around 1371. It is regarded as the oldest stone inscription of Northern Thailand written in old Thai language and script. The so-called *fak kham*

choice of Lamphun (Hariphunchai) rather than Chiang Mai, to build the new religious centre in, might reflect the unbroken religious importance of Lamphun as the capital of Mon, pre-Thai Buddhism in Lan Na.⁴⁷ Vickery's suggestion that Lamphun was at that time not only "the cultural capital" of Lan Na but also the politically leading city of the north,⁴⁸ overlooks the fact that already in 1373 Sumanathera moved the holy relic he had brought from Sukhothai to Wat Suan Dòk ("The Flower Garden Monastery"), a monastery at the outskirts of Chiang Mai, which formerly had been the king's own pleasure garden.⁴⁹

Whereas Wat Phra Yün symbolised the continuity with the pre-Tai (Mon-Lawa) historical past, Wat Suan Dòk symbolised the merger of Theravada Buddhism and Yuan political tradition without rejecting or coming into conflict with the Mon-Lawa traditions.⁵⁰ Sumanathera and his followers were sent out to ordain monks throughout the kingdom in accordance with the ritual of the new order. Even monks belonging to the old order had to disrobe and ordain again, this time in the "proper" way. Coupled with the slowly increasing preponderance of Chiang Mai, the cultural leadership exerted by the Singhalese sect encouraged the political centralisation of Lan Na and the accelerated development of a regional sense of identity as Yuan among its multi-ethnic population.⁵¹

Phaṅa Kü Na's relatively peaceful reign was followed by a dynastic strife that did not seriously harm the unity of Lan Na. Saen Müang Ma succeeded his father in 1385 at the age of twenty-three. But Thao Maha Phom, Kü Na's younger brother and local ruler of Chiang Rai, refused to recognise his nephew. He tried to seize the throne for himself, but failed. Maha Phom fled to Ayutthaya and asked King Bòrommaracha I for support. A few months later, in 1386, the combined forces of Chiang Rai and Ayutthaya marched to Chiang Mai via Lampang. There they were forced to retreat

script was also used in Sukhothai inscriptions of the 14th century. A transcript of the inscription of Wat Phra Yün in Siamese letters, together with a version of modernised spelling has been published in *Prachum silacarük*, vol. 3, 1965. Alexander B. GRISWOLD (1975) published an English translation in his study on the history of Wat Phra Yün.

CAMPA (n.d.: 79) concludes on the basis of his textual interpretation that Wat Phra Yün was already an old monastery by the time of Sumanthera's arrival. King Kü Na did not build a new monastery, but restored and enlarged an already existing one as the new headquarters of the Sukhothai monk.

⁴⁷ SWEARER and SOMMAI 1978: 25.

⁴⁸ VICKERY 2003: 30–31. He argues that Kü Na, "the Haripuñjay/Lamphun, not Chiang Mai, king in 1369 was a Thai upstart who had just won a chiefdom from Mon predecessors (sic!), and who fabricated a lineage of prestigious names from neighboring polities and old legend." Following this line of argument we find it difficult to explain the complete absence of Mon inscriptions later than the mid-13th century as well as the transition of power – *after* 1370 — from the small town of Lamphun to the many times more spacious and populous city of Chiang Mai.

⁴⁹ Concerning the life and work of Sumanathera and his Singhalese sect see *Tamnan mūlasāsanā* 1970: 235–61; *Tamnan munlasasana chapap wat pa daeng* 1976: 9–11; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 292–97. The Chiang Mai Chronicle is completely silent on Sumanathera and his role in Lan Na. Moreover, it devotes less than one page to Kü Na's reign in general. See CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 64–65; CMC-TPCM 1971: 42–43; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 85–86.

⁵⁰ Wat Suan Dòk is situated on the foot of Dòì Suthep, the sacred mountain of the Lawa. Thus, the new centre of Northern Thai Buddhism reconciled the archaic tradition of the Chiang Mai region with the cosmopolite perspective of Buddhism.

⁵¹ As to the role of Buddhism in forming a distinct Yuan culture and polity see also YUPHIN Khemmuk 1988b: 5–16.

after a fierce battle.⁵² The victory of the Chiang Mai forces as reported by the Northern Thai chronicles is corroborated by Siamese sources.⁵³ As to the consequences of the dispute, the chronicles disagree. *Jinakālamāṭīpakaraṇaṃ* stresses that

Later Lakhapurāgama⁵⁴ [Saen Müang Ma] equipped a large army, marched into the Yona Kingdom, and in a conspiracy against his uncle took him captive.⁵⁵

The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* reports that “the king sent his uncle Thao Maha Phrom (Tao Maha Phom) to rule Chiang Rai as he had done before.”⁵⁶ Although *Jinakālamāṭīpakaraṇaṃ* is considered in general very reliable concerning chronology, as to Maha Phrom’s fate, I would prefer to follow the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*. Maha Phrom obviously possessed a significant support among the nobility in the Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen area. The king, Saen Müang Ma, had to take this into account. Confronted with an expanding regional power to the south, namely Ayutthaya, the ruler of Chiang Mai sought reconciliation with his uncle instead of antagonizing him and his power base.

3. Expansion and Consolidation

When Saen Müang Ma died in spring 1402, the Lan Na elders convened in Chiang Mai and elected the late king’s thirteen year old son, Sam Fang Kaen, the new ruler.⁵⁷ Ñi (Yi) Kum Kam, Saen Müang Ma’s ten years elder brother by a different mother, was passed over in the succession. Though Lan Na lacked a rule of primogeniture, it would be interesting to learn more about the reasons why the late king’s elder brother was not chosen by the privy council. The chronicles do not give any clear clues, but it could be possible that “Maha Tewi”,⁵⁸ Sam Fang Kaen’s mother, who was a princess from Sipsòng Panna, supported her own, still underage son Sam Fang Kaen in order

⁵² CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 65–66; CMC-TPCM 1971: 42–43; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 86–88; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 297–305.

⁵³ PPKSA-LP, PP 1/1 1963: 132.

⁵⁴ Lakhapuragama [Sanskrit: Laksanapuragama] is the Pāli translation of Saen Müang Ma [lit.: “He who had visitors from 100,000 *müang*”].

⁵⁵ JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 127.

⁵⁶ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 67; CMC-TPCM 1971: 43.

⁵⁷ *Jinakālamāṭīpakaraṇaṃ* says that Saen Müang Ma died in 1401. See JKM, Ratanapañña 1968: 128. According to the CMC, Sam Fang Kaen was nominated to be the king on Friday, the full-moon day in the eighth month of the year C.S. 763 [Wednesday, 27 April 1401]. See CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 71; CMC-TPCM 1971: 45; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 19; CMC-N, CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 92. WINAI (1996: 71) argues that if we trust *Ming shilu*, it is evident that the last tribute mission which arrived at the Chinese imperial court in October 1402 was still appointed by King Saen Müang Ma. That means that at the time of the mission’s departure Saen Müang Ma was still alive. If we assume that the journey from Chiang Mai to Nanjing lasted between two to four months, we may conclude that Saen Müang Ma was still alive in early 1402. This argument is highly convincing. My own suggestion is that the king died on the first waning of the seventh month, C.S. 763, which was a *kot sanga* day: Monday, 20 March 1402.

⁵⁸ Maha Tewi/Thewi (มหาเทวี), “great queen”, is an honorary title reserved for the widowed queen mother. According to CMC-TPCM and CMC-TSHR, king Sam Fang Kaen’s mother also held the title Tilokcuka Tewi (ดีโลกุคเทวี), while she is called Tilokata Tewi.

to control politics from the background.⁵⁹ She feared Ñi Kum Kam, who was not her son and received support from her brother-in-law, Saen Müang Ma's younger brother. Later, Sam Fang Kaen would reward his uncle for his loyalty by appointing him governor of Phayao. Moreover, almost the whole nobility in the capital Chiang Mai supported the new king.⁶⁰ They had a good reason for doing so: At the time Ñi Kum Kam was governor of Chiang Rai, he got this position as successor of Maha Phom, one of the former king's most ardent rivals. Maha Phom's loyalists now supported Ñi Kum Kam, hoping that the Chiang Rai region would gain more political influence if their candidate, Ñi Kum Kam, would become king of Lan Na.

The old rivalry between Southwest and Northeast Lan Na, between Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, broke out anew. As had been the case after the death of King Kū Na fifteen years earlier, the regional rivalry again took the form of a conflict of dynastic succession. Supported by the nobility in the Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen region, Ñi Kum Kam marched to Chiang Mai via Fang. The insurgents were supported by Sukhothai which, under King Sai Lüthai (r. 1398–1419) had regained — though only for a relative short period (c. 1400–1412) — a dominant position in the central plain and controlled the region from Nakhòn Sawan in the south up to Nan in the north.⁶¹ The fighting, reported in detail in the Northern Thai chronicles, took a heavy toll of lives on both sides: “Numerous Chiang Mai men and the Southerners [Siamese] died. They killed each other near a pond which has therefore been named Nòng Saen Tòn (Pond of the 100,000 dismembered) as it is called until present.”⁶² Finally the troops of Chiang Mai gained the upper hand, and the Siamese withdrew towards Sukhothai where Ñi Kum Kam was granted asylum.⁶³ After Sam Fang Kaen's victory the official coronation ceremonies took place.⁶⁴ This is the course of events as reported in the two main Northern Thai chronicles — *Jinakālamālipakaraṇam* and the Chiang Mai Chronicle — the latter having a strong pro-Sam Fang Kaen bias.

Chinese sources raise doubts about about this account, especially the fate of the former governor of Chiang Rai. The *Mingshi gao* confirms that “in the fifth month of the second year of the Yongle emperor” (June 1404) two “Military-cum-Civilian Pacification Commissions” (*junmin xuanwei shisi*) were formed in Lan Na, namely

⁵⁹ The CMC reports: “Cao Saen Müang Ma had two sons of different mothers. One was Thao Yi Kum Kam, so called because this prince was born in Wiang Kum Kam. The other was Thao Sam Fang Kaen. This prince was [so named] because when his mother was three months pregnant [with him], Cao Saen Müang Ma took the lady on a tour of his country, into the Sipsòng Panna, travelling from one *panna* to the next, until in seven months they came to Fang Kaen Panna. It was in the tenth month [of her pregnancy], and she gave birth to a royal prince [there], so he was named Sam Fang Kaen for that reason.” Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 68. Cf. CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 18; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 91.

⁶⁰ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 68; CMC-TPCM 1971: 44–45; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 91–92.

⁶¹ GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1969, WYATT 1984a: 69.

⁶² Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 71; CMC-TPCM 1971: 46; cf. CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 95.

⁶³ As to the vicissitudes of warfare see CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 69–71; CMC-TPCM 1971: 44–46, CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 92–96; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 19–21.

⁶⁴ A stone inscription of the time mentions the year 1402/03 as the date of Sam Fang Kaen's accession to the throne. See “Silacarük kasat ratchawong mangrai” [Stone inscriptions of the kings of the Mangrai dynasty], in: *Sinlapakòn*, vol. 2 1980: 47, after SARASAWADEE 1996: 141. The chronicles CMC and JKM, however, mention the year 1401/02. The difference of one year may be explained by the circumstance that the fighting against Ñi Kum Kam and the Siamese invaders led to a delay of the official coronation ceremony.

Babai-zhenai (Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen) und Babai-dadian (Chiang Mai). In the same year their respective rulers Dao Zhao-ni (Ñi Kum Kam) and Dao Zhao-san (Sam Fang Kaen) sent tribute missions to the imperial court.⁶⁵ If this report is accurate it would imply that by mid-1404 Sam Fang Kaen's control of the upper Mekong region was still far from secure. Furthermore, the Chinese recognition of two separate political entities called "Babai" demonstrates that in the eyes of Ming China Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen were at least as important as Chiang Mai. It seems that the Chinese considered Ñi Kum Kam and not his younger brother Sam Fang Kaen, who at the time of their father's death was still a child at the age of thirteen, the legitimate ruler of Lan Na. According to a palm-leaf manuscript, entitled *Tamnan phaña sam fang kaen rop hò* ("Chronicle about the war of King Sam Fang Kaen against the Chinese"), the compromise between the two royal brothers broke up not earlier than 1410 (a *kot yi* year, C.S. 772) when "Tao Ñi [...] instigated King Lü[thai] of the southern country (here: Sukhothai) to attack Chiang Mai. [But] he failed to seize either Lamphun, [Wiang] Kum Kam, nor Chiang Mai".⁶⁶ Only thereafter Ñi Kum Kam lost his power base in Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen and fled to Sukhothai. "Babai-zhenai" as an autonomous, semi-independent polity ceased to exist.

By the end of the year Sam Fang Kaen and those high-ranking nobles who supported him seems to have consolidated their grip of power as in November 1404 (Yongle 2, 8th month, *jichou*: 24 September 1404) a Chinese envoy en route (via Chiang Saen) to Mengyang (Müang Yang, north of Chiang Tung) was prevented from continuing his journey by Sam Fang Kaen's men. In reaction to this incident, in August 1405 (Yongle 3, 7th month, *renzi*: 13 August 1405) Sam Fang Kaen was delivered an imperial edict stating that the Lan Na ruler should capture the culprits to hand them over to the Chinese authorities. Otherwise he would be held solely responsible for the most serious consequences: "If you are still perplexed and incorrigible, then we will send troops to chastise you. [Even] children will be slaughtered and not be pardoned."⁶⁷

This was the prelude to a dangerous conflict between Lan Na and her powerful neighbour in the north. The war, remembered by the Lan Na people as *soek hò* (เสือกหัว), "Chinese war", resulted in the temporary loss of Chiang Saen and several other towns.⁶⁸ Finally, in November 1405, Dao Zhao-ni, the "aboriginal official of Babai-zhenai", delivered a missive of the King of Chiang Mai, admitting his "crimes". In reaction to this gesture of submission by a dependent vassal, the Ming court gave the order to General Mu Sheng (1368–1439), the military commander of the Chinese troops engaged in the war against Lan Na, to withdraw his troops:

⁶⁵ *Taizong Shilu* 31.563–64 (Yongle 2, 5th month, *jisi* day: July 6, 1404), see also *Mingshi gao*, Chapter 189, pp. 35b–36a; *Mingshi*, Chapter 315, p. 8161, LIEW n.d.: 12–13.

⁶⁶ SRI 84.056.05.009–009: *Tamnan phaña sam fang kaen rop hò*, f° 4/2–3. The title of this manuscript running over 30 palm-leaf pages is not the original one. Though the chronicle starts with King Sam Fang Kaen's rise to power, it devotes only the first seven pages to this reign. The following three pages deal with Tilok's reign where much attention is given to the conflict with Vietnam following the Vietnamese invasion of Laos (see discussion below). The rest of the manuscript, however, is on religious matters.

⁶⁷ *Taizong Shilu* 33, 588–89 (Yongle 2, 8th month, *jichou* day); *Taizong Shilu* 44.698–700 (Yongle 3, 7th month, *renzi* day), see also *Mingshi gao*, Chapter 189, p. 36a; *Mingshi*, Chapter 315, p. 8161, LIEW n.d.: 14.

⁶⁸ See the report of the Chinese general Mu Sheng (1368–1439) dated December 1405, in: *Mingshi gao*, Chapter 189, p. 36b; *Mingshi*, Chapter 315, pp. 8161–62, LIEW n.d.: 14. For more details, see *Taizong Shilu* 47.737–38 (Yongle 3, 12th month, *wuchen* day: 27 December, 1405).

Now that [Your Majesty] has received the memorial of the Marquis of Xiping reporting that Babai have admitted their crime and surrendered in all sincerity (*nakuan*). When one repents for one's crime one ought to be pardoned. On receiving the imperial edict all of you should stop proceeding [to Babai] and retreat.⁶⁹

The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* frankly admits the almost hopeless military situation for the Lan Na forces at Chiang Saen, as “Cao Lum Fa” (“Lord of Heaven”) now had the intention to subjugate the “whole country of the king of Lan Na”. With the help of an abbot, experienced in “all sciences and arts”, who called on the guardian spirits (*devatā*) of the country and the Mekong river, it was possible, according to the chronologist, to influence favourably the forces of heaven. Finally, the “Hò headquarters” was hit by lightning, causing the death of numerous enemies. Impressed by the “supernatural power” that the king of Lan Na obviously possessed, the Chinese withdrew. “Henceforth, we should never attack the country of the lords of Lan Na, for all generations.”⁷⁰

Lan Na eventually surmounted the crisis caused by the *soek hò*. Most of the rest of his long reign Sam Fang Kaen lived in peace. Step by step he consolidated his rule throughout the kingdom. The traditional role of Chiang Rai as the “city of the viceroy” (*müang uparat* เมืองอุปราช) ceased to exist, for Sam Fang Kaen appointed his eldest surviving son as *uparat* in Wiang Cetlin near Chiang Mai. There he was under the strict control of his father, the king. Several other sons were sent to govern such important towns as Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrao and Fang.⁷¹ In spite of Sam Fang Kaen's measures to increase his personal power and centralise the administration of Lan Na, the king still had to rely on his own family in controlling remote *müang*.

Neither the leadership of the Mangrai dynasty nor Chiang Mai's role as the kingdom's capital had ever been seriously questioned since Phaña Kün Na's reign. This did not happen even in the subsequent period, as may be illustrated by the following striking example. In 1441, a powerful group of nobles forced Phaña Sam Fang Kaen to abdicate in favour of his son, who was enthroned under the name Tilokaracha [Tilok] (*1409).⁷² The new king had to establish his authority against an ambitious palace official, Sam Dek Nòi (Sam Dek Yòi or Saen Khan)⁷³, who stormed in during the coronation (*hong kham*), and was told by those nobles whose aid he

⁶⁹ *Mingshi gao*, Chapter 189, p. 37a, LIEW n.d.: 25, taken from *Taizong Shilu* 49.737–38 (Yongle 3, 12th month, wuchen: 27 December 1405).

⁷⁰ [แต่ขึ้นไปเมื่อหน้าเราสมควรมาตกลึกในบ้านเมืองทั่วล้านนาสักเพื่อสืบชั่วลูกหลานไปพวย หน้าเทอะว่าอันแล]. CMC-HP, AROONRUT and WYATT 1995: 77 as well as WYATT and AROONRUT 1995: 74; CMC-TPCM 1971: 47; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 100–102.

⁷¹ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 74–75; CMC-TPCM 1971: 48; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 26–27; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 321.

⁷² Jkm, Ratanapañña 1968: 133; CMC-TPCM 1971: 49; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 320–21.

⁷³ *Saen* (“hundred thousand”) is a rank of the leading official in a larger district (*panna*). In smaller *panna* the high-ranking officials were called *mün* (“ten thousand”). Sam Dek Nòi was appointed governor of Panna Khan (CMC-TPCM 1971: 49). Lacking a refined system of civil and military hierarchy like that established by King Bòrommatrailokanat (r. 1448–1488) of Ayutthaya, ranks like *saen*, *mün*, *phan* (“thousand”) etc. came closest in Lan Na to resembling the Ayutthayan *sakdina* system. For titles and ranks in the Kingdom of Lan Na see SARASWADEE 1988: 6–7; AROONRUT 1988: 9–10.

sought: “You are of no princely blood and thus can never be a king.”⁷⁴ Though lacking a rule of primogeniture, there did exist an unwritten law in Lan Na that only direct descendants of King Mangrai, the founder of Chiang Mai, could be elected king.⁷⁵

During Phaṅa Sam Fang Kaen’s long reign (1401–1441), a new reformist Singhalese Buddhist order, the so-called Wat Pa Daeng sect or *nikai langkawong*, spread alongside the older Wat Suan Dòk-Sumanathera tradition.⁷⁶ Sam Fang Kaen was no supporter of the new order. He apparently advocated popular, heterodox forms of Buddhism. The king was accused of greatly honouring “the votaries of the demons.” He “worshipped wooden groves, trees, heaped mounds, rocks and forests with offerings such as cattle and buffaloes.”⁷⁷ Sam Fang Kaen’s return to “animism” provided the pretext for his sudden downfall. Whether the *nikai langkawong* was directly or indirectly involved in the transfer of power from Sam Fang Kaen to Tilok is not clear. But though Tilok in general followed a policy of religious tolerance, trying to minimise sectarian differences without forcing conformity, he strongly favoured the *nikai langkawong*, which he placed under royal patronage. Tilok united the religious and political spheres and created a single moral community centred on his own person as Universal Monarch (*cakravartin*). The *cakravartin* ideal was closely related to the concepts of *totsa barami*⁷⁸ and *dharmarāja*⁷⁹ as exemplified best by a passage from *Jinakālamālipakaraṇaṃ* glorifying the king.

He was endowed with heroism, valour, prowess and splendour; was capable of discerning what is beneficent to one’s self and others; was prudent, faithful and pious and was possessed of profound wisdom. From the time of receiving the consecration, he was renowned in all quarters of the Universal Monarch Siridhamma, the Emperor Tilaka.⁸⁰

The royal ideology was best demonstrated by the king’s full name *Cao Sirithamma Cakraphat Tilokrarachathirat* – “The lord of the *dharmā*, *cakravartin*, ruler of the three worlds, lord of (all) kings”.⁸¹ One might be tempted to suggest that the important changes in religio-political ideology marked a major transformation of the state during Tilok’s reign as well.

Tilok’s concept of king as a “just ruler” and “universal monarch” was shared by his contemporary, King Bòrommatrailokanat [Trailok] of Ayutthaya (r. 1448–1488).⁸² Indeed, the reigns of the two kings and arch-enemies almost fell together: Trailok outlived Tilok by only one year. By the beginning of his reign, Tilok faced an expanding Siamese (Ayutthaya) empire which, in 1438, had incorporated

⁷⁴ CMC-TPCM (1971: 49) states: “*hao ni bò cai cūa tao phaṅa, cak pen phaṅa bò dai.*”

⁷⁵ See WYATT 1984a: 77.

⁷⁶ See SWEARER and PREMCHIT 1978: 26–28.

⁷⁷ JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 128.

⁷⁸ The “ten Buddhist virtues” (Siamese: *totsa barami* ทศบารมี *dasa pārami{yo}*), are *dāna* [donation], *sīla* [religious precept], *nekkhamma* [renunciation], *paññā* [wisdom], *virīya* [courage], *khanti* [patience], *sacca* [honesty], *adhitthāna* [praying], *mettā* [mercy] and *ubekkhā* [equanimity].

⁷⁹ USANEE 1988: 22.

⁸⁰ JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 133–34; Tilaka is a Pāli-nised form of Tilok.

⁸¹ For details see USANEE 1983: 21–22.

⁸² Like his rival from Chiang Mai, Boroammatrailokanat [“the universal protector of the three worlds”] had a name which expressed his *cakravartin* ideology.

what little was left of Sukhothai. Tilok for his part turned southwards to check the Siamese threat. When two years after Tilok's rise to power the ruler of Nan decided to challenge Lan Na, a full war broke out between the two states. Nan, which was economically important because of its salt mines,⁸³ finally lost its independence in 1449. Phrae, Nan's ally, became part of the kingdom of Lan Na, too.⁸⁴

In 1451, the ruler of Sòng Khwae (Phitsanulok), a prince of the Sukhothai line, defected to Chiang Mai and encouraged Tilok to send troops to liberate the Sukhothai area.⁸⁵ Decades of devastating warfare between Lan Na and Ayutthaya followed. "At issue were the small principalities on the northern fringe of the Central Plain, as well as hegemony in the Tai world."⁸⁶ Sukhothai and Phitsanulok, to where the last king of Sukhothai had transferred his capital in the 1420s, were important not only because of their "historic past" but also as "the focus of Thai nationalism".⁸⁷ Geographic location boosted their economic importance as well. Trade routes linking Lan Na and regions in upper north (Yunnan) with the sea had to pass Sukhothai/Phitsanulok, either on the way to Lower Burma (Martaban) or to the Gulf of Siam (Ayutthaya). Thus, the control of the Sukhothai region by either Chiang Mai or Ayutthaya gave the victorious side a decisive long-term advantage over its rivals.

The struggle for control over Sukhothai/Phitsanulok reached its zenith around 1460. In that year the governor of Chaliang (Si Satchanalai) rebelled against Ayutthaya and submitted to Tilok.⁸⁸ In spite of the reinforcement from his new vassal, Tilok failed to take the cities of Phitsanulok and Kamphaengphet one year later.⁸⁹ He retreated to Chiang Mai empty-handed. By 1475 the struggle had reached an impasse, and the contending powers made peace with each other.⁹⁰ The vagaries of warfare between Ayutthaya and Lan Na are described in detail in the Northern Thai chronicles and the famous Siamese poem *lilit yuan phai*, the "poem on the defeat of the Yuan."⁹¹

Apart from pure military strategies, Tilok and Trailok used sophisticated non-military tactics as well. In 1465, two years after Trailok had transferred his capital from Ayutthaya to Phitsanulok, the king formally abdicated in favour of his son

⁸³ See USANEE 1983: 92.

⁸⁴ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 80–81; CMC-TPCM 1971: 53; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 32–33.

⁸⁵ The prince named Yuthit Ciang [Yudhiṣṭhira] provided Tilok with important information on Ayudhaya's military forces and was appointed to a high position in Chiang Mai. Later, Yuthit Ciang became governor of Panna Pukha (in Nan) and of Phayao.

⁸⁶ WYATT 1984a: 77.

⁸⁷ As GRISWOLD and PRASERT (1976: 132) have suggested.

⁸⁸ PPKSA-LP, PP 1/1 1963: 136. In the Ayutthayan chronicle Tilok is called *maharat* ["the great king"].

⁸⁹ Ibid.. The Chiang Mai Chronicle tells the story a little differently. Campaigning against Phitsanulok in 1459/6, Tilok received the submission of the terrified governor of Chaliang. On his way back to Chiang Mai, Tilok assigned his general Mūn Dong, the ruler of Lampang, the duty of supervising Chaliang's administration. In 1461, the ruler of Chaliang plotted against his new suzerain. Mūn Dong detected the plot and caught the governor who was finally removed to a remote *müang* in Lan Na. Then Tilok appointed Mūn Dong to be the new governor of Chaliang. See CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 89; CMC-TPCM 1971: 58–59; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 123–24.

⁹⁰ PPKSA-LP, PP 1/1 1963: 138. The Northern Thai chronicles do not speak explicitly about "friendship" (*maitri*) with Sukhothai, but record the reconstruction of the famous Wat Cedi Luang, Chiang Mai, between 1475 and 1479. However, this indicates relative peace in those years. See CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 98; CMC-TPCM 1971: 65.

⁹¹ GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1976.

Intharacha and underwent ordination in Wat Culamani. Trailok spent eight months in this new monastery located just to the south of Phitsanulok.⁹² This enhanced his prestige as a pious and just ruler (*thammikarat*) among his own citizens. Even the kings of Pegu, Luang Prabang, and Lan Na sent him the requisites of monkhood. But Tilok turned down Trailok's cunning request that "Müang Chaliang be returned in order to provide alms for his sustenance".⁹³ The "obstinacy" and lack of *barami* the ruler of Lan Na had demonstrated hereby seriously impaired his reputation as *thammikarat*.

Another method of psychological warfare was spying. Tilok sent spies against Phitsanulok and Ayutthaya, while Trailok ordered Mang Lung Wang, a Burmese monk experienced in sorcery, to go to Chiang Mai and to act there as an agent provocateur. His knowledge of black magic (*saiyasat*) should help undermine and weaken Lan Na from within.⁹⁴ This strategy bore fruit. Before the sorcerer-monk could be detected, Tilok killed Bun Rüang, his only son whom he falsely accused of treason. *Lilit yuan phai* writes not without malicious joy:

From that time on, the Lao king [Tiloka], exhausted and sick at heart, acted like a madman. Everything he did seemed strange beyond words, his heart ached as if pierced by thorns, and he turned to brutalities of every kind. For example, he was so afraid that someone might usurp his throne that he had his beloved son Bun Rüang arrested and executed.⁹⁵

By the late 1470s Lan Na seems to have fully recovered from the turmoil of its "cakravatin wars" with Ayutthaya. However, from east of the Mekong a new danger was looming. In 1479, a huge Vietnamese force had overrun large parts of the Lao kingdom of Lan Sang and seized its capital Luang Prabang. With the support of an army from Lan Na, commanded by the governor of the eastern border *müang* of Nan, the Lao were able to repulse the invaders in the following year. While the Lao sources are silent about the crucial help they received from the Yuan brethren of Lan Na and attribute the victory exclusively to the military leadership of a young Lao prince, the Lan Na historiography presents the course of events differently.⁹⁶ The CMC, for example, reports that the Chinese commander-in-chief in Yunnan did not want to believe the victory was won by the Lan Na troops and instead insisted on a Chinese mediating role in the war among the "Southern Barbarians". Finally, Vietnamese prisoners-of-war persuaded the Chinese of the defeat of Vietnamese emperor Le Thanh Tong (r. 1460–1497), whose forces had been considered superior.⁹⁷ In recognition of his crucial victory over the Vietnamese, King Tilok of Lan Na was given a sealed prescript (*lai cum lai cia* ลายจุ่มลายเจี๋ย) by the Chinese emperor, mentioning Tilok's as the "[preeminent] ruler in the West", i.e., in the regions west of the Mekong river.⁹⁸

⁹² PPKSA-LP, PP 1/1 1963: 137.

⁹³ Quoted from CMC-TPCM 1971: 59. Cf. CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 90.

⁹⁴ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 95–96; CMC-TPCM 1971: 62; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 131–32.

⁹⁵ Quoted from GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1976: 146.

⁹⁶ See SILA 1964: 45–46; cf. LORRILLARD 1995: 103–11; STUART-FOX 1998: 65–66.

⁹⁷ CMC-HP, WYATT and AROONRUT 1995: 98–99. Cf. NC, Wyatt 1994: 57.

⁹⁸ CMC-HP, WYATT and AROONRUT 1995: 100–101.

A leading Thai historian, Winai Pongsripan, confronts the Northern Thai and the Lao chronicles with contemporary Chinese sources. He arrives at the conclusion that the Chinese sources confirm the Lan Na victory and, moreover, emphasise the military pressure put by Chinese troops on Vietnam's northern borders. Several divisions stationed in the southeastern border provinces of the Chinese empire were mobilised but did not intervene directly in the fighting.⁹⁹ *Mingshi gao* reports that the Chinese emperor sent the king of Lan Na 100 *tael* (1 *tael* = 0.0311 kg) of silver and four rolls of variegated silk (*caibi*) to reward him. The memorial submitted by the Duke of Qianguo, Mu Zong, to the Ming court reveals that king Tilok had obviously felt provoked by a “bogus” edict of the Vietnamese emperor making it easier for Lan Na to join the war against Vietnam. Mu Zong states:

[Dao] Lan-na (Cao Lan Na, i.e., Tilok) is able to protect the lives of his people and defeat the bandits of Jiaozhi (Annam/Vietnam). He has rescued and protected Laowo (Laos). Once when the people of Jiaozhi used a bogus imperial edict to threaten and decoy [the chieftain of] Babai (Lan Na), Babai destroyed the edict and used [an] elephant to trample it. I beg that an imperial edict be issued to reward and eulogise the loyalty and righteousness [of Babai].¹⁰⁰

During the last decade of his reign Tilok concentrated on strengthening the administration of Lan Na and on gaining religious merit. He constructed numerous temples throughout his kingdom, and in 1477 a new Pāli edition of the Tipiṭaka was published.¹⁰¹ When Tilok died in 1487, his grandson Ñòt Chiang Rai (NT: Ñòt Ciang Hai) ascended to the throne. The chronicles do not tell us much about the relatively short reign of this king. But Ñòt Chiang Rai was obviously quite unpopular, since in 1495 he was forced to abdicate in favour of his 14-year-old son Müang Kaeo. The deposed king spent the last eleven years of his life as ruler of Cuat, a small *müang* in the Shan region.¹⁰²

The reign of Müang Kaeo (1495–1525) is remembered as the “golden age” of Lan Na. Buddhist Pāli literature flourished. Such famous works as *Jinakālamāli-pakaraṇaṃ*, *Cāmadevīvaṃṣa* and *Mūlasāsanā* were written in that time. The king supported the construction of monasteries on an unprecedented scale. The three main Buddhist orders (*nikai/nikāya*) in Lan Na, i.e., the two reformed Singhalese orders based in Wat Suan Dòk and Wat Pa Daeng respectively, and the traditional order based in Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai, were reconciled by Müang Kaeo.¹⁰³ Furthermore, the king built a religious hierarchy from the top to the bottom that paralleled the country's secular administrative system. The three Buddhist orders supported Müang Kaeo's claim of being a “righteous ruler” (*thammikarat*); in return the king endowed the *sangha* with various privileges.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ PRAPUET and WINAI 1994, notably pp. 102–106.

¹⁰⁰ *Mingshi gao*, Chapter 189, 38a; LIEW n.d.: 35; taken from *Xianzong Shilu* 216.3752 (Chenghua 17, 6th month, renzi: 5 July 1481).

¹⁰¹ For details see JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 139–46; PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 341–49.

¹⁰² CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 103–104; CMC-TPCM 1971: 69; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 58.

¹⁰³ The traditional pre-Mangrai Buddhist order had lost its pre-eminence after 1369; nevertheless it remained strong at least in the Lamphun area as is demonstrated by King Müang Kaeo's pilgrimage to Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai in 1512. See JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 153.

¹⁰⁴ For details see YUPHIN 1988a, in particular pp. 155–56.

During the “golden age” Lan Na had developed into a major regional trading centre.¹⁰⁵ In his study on Ming-Southeast Asian overland interactions, Sun Laichen has convincingly argued that the “amazingly large quantities of metals spent for religious purposes [...] no doubt gave a great impulse to trade, both internal and external”.¹⁰⁶ Most of the imported metal, such as gold, silver, copper, and iron, probably came from Yunnan. The (temporary) incorporation of Sipsòng Panna, a region rich in silver and iron ore mines, as a vassal state of Chiang Mai during Tilok’s reign thus gave rise to an important boost to Lan Na’s economy. However, the bulk of the needed metals were certainly delivered by the Chinese from various other parts of present-day Yunnan. Silk was another important item imported from China, although some silk was apparently produced locally in Lan Na as well.¹⁰⁷ The close commercial relations between Lan Na and China seem to have continued at least until the beginnings of Burmese rule in Lan Na. Ralph Fitch, an English merchant who claims to have visited Chiang Mai (Jamahey) during his journey to the Far East in 1583–91 reports that many Chinese merchants were in the city bringing with them “great store of Muske, Gold, Silver, and many other things of China worke”.¹⁰⁸ Nicolas Pimenta, another Western traveler to Chiang Mai tells us that at the time of his visit (1599) Chiang Mai (Jangoma) was “stored with Copper, Muske, Pepper, Silke, Gold, Silver”.¹⁰⁹ Most of these goods — apart from pepper — probably were imported from Yunnan.

The second half of Müang Kaeo’s thirty-year reign was overshadowed by fightings with Ayutthaya. Yuan attacks upon Sukhothai were repulsed but Ayutthaya’s counter-offensive crumbled likewise. In 1515, Siamese troops seized Lampang. They did not stay for long but withdrew with plenty of war booty. Numerous inhabitants of Lampang were deported to Siam.¹¹⁰ Though Ayutthaya had not won a complete victory over Chiang Mai, the strategic hegemony of the Siamese was never again seriously challenged by Lan Na.

As a reaction to the looting of Lampang by the Siamese King Müang Kaeo ordered to repair and strengthen the fortifications of the cities of Chiang Mai and Lamphun.¹¹¹ Henceforth the military confrontation between Lan Na and Ayutthaya subsided and finally reached an impasse. After 1515 the strategic position of Lan Na, compared to that half a century earlier, was much more adverse. The city walls of Chiang Mai and of Lamphun were completely repaired,¹¹² but due to depopulation caused by decades of warfare and the deportation of numerous inhabitants of

¹⁰⁵ Gehan Wijeyewardene asserts that throughout its history Chiang Mai has been “a major centre of trade” and that trade was its “economic backbone” (WIJEYWARDENE 1985).

¹⁰⁶ SUN Laichen 2000, see in particular Table 7 in Sun’s PhD thesis. I am grateful to Sun Laichen for having given me access to the relevant parts of his thesis.

¹⁰⁷ A silk weaver is recorded in the inscription of Wat Chiang Man. See GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1977b: 130.

¹⁰⁸ FITCH 1905: 195.

¹⁰⁹ PIMENTA 1905: 211.

¹¹⁰ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 105; CMC-TPCM 1971: 69–70; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 147.

¹¹¹ In 1516 the inhabitants of Chiang Mai had to produce bricks which in the followings year were used to panel the inner (rectangular) city wall. See CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 106; CMC-TPCM 1971: 70; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 148; JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 162; cf. PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 365.

¹¹² CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 106; CMC-TPCM 1971: 70; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 61; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 148.

Lampang to Siam, the “southern flank” of Chiang Mai was weakened demographically as well as economically. When Chiang Mai and Ayutthaya finally made peace with each other in 1522/23,¹¹³ Chiang Mai was on the defensive. Even the political alliance between Chiang Mai and the Mon state of Pegu could not change the balance of power decisively.¹¹⁴

At this juncture one is tempted to query whether it was by circumstances besides control of manpower that had contributed to the eventual Siamese dominance. Joaquim de Campos has argued that the Siamese success was made possible not least because Siam was aligned with the Portuguese, who delivered them modern firearms.¹¹⁵ However, it would be misleading to suggest that the Lan Na side had virtually no access to firearms. In his recent study on military technology transfers from Ming China to Southeast Asia, Sun Laichen demonstrates that Lan Na had made use of Chinese-made firearms well before the mid-15th century. Though the Ming court strictly prohibited the proliferation, not to mention export of weapons to foreign countries,¹¹⁶ including its own vassal states, Lan Na and several other Tai polities acquired the knowledge of gunpowder technology of China from Chinese prisoners-of-war, deserters, and “profit-seekers”, as Wang Ji (1378–1460), the Minister of War, complained in a memorial written in 1444:

In the past Luchuan rebelled primarily because profit-seekers on the frontier, carrying weapons and other goods illegally, sneaked into Mubang (Hsenwi), Miandian (Ava), Cheli (Sipsong Panna), Babai (Lan Na), etc., and communicated with the aboriginals chieftains and exchanged goods. There were also those who taught them to make weapons, liked [their] women and remained there.¹¹⁷

When Chiang Mai forces attacked Phrae in 1443, cannons, called *pu cao* (ປູເຈ້) ¹¹⁸ in the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, were employed to subdue this recalcitrant *müang*.¹¹⁹ Moreover, by the mid-15th century the Tai Yuan and other Tai-speaking peoples, including the Shan, Tai Lü, and Lao, had learned how to produce rockets (*pün fai* ปืนไฟ) as well.¹²⁰ It could even be argued that Lan Na possessed an advantage

¹¹³ As to the peace agreement, which comprised the exchange of envoys, see CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 107; CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 150; MS, Hundius Collection: *Phün wongsa mahakhasat* [...], f° 83. Cf. PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 369–70.

¹¹⁴ In the National Museum, Lamphun, there is a stele that originally was set up in the nearby monastery Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai. This stele has the (non-authentic) title “Haṅsavafī Sī Satyādhiṣṭhāna” („Haṅsavafī (Pegu) Declaration of Loyalty”, which says that the Mon ruler of Pegu — probably around 1522 — assures his “elder brother” (*phi*) Phaṅa Kaeo, king of Chiang Mai of his loyalty. See PENTH/PHANPHEN/SILAO 1999: 177–83.

¹¹⁵ DE CAMPOS 1940: 6–7. Cf. WOOD 1924: 99.

¹¹⁶ See *Mingshi*, chapter 324, p. 8384: (Around 1371 AD) when Champa asked weapons from the Ming court to fight against Annam, China rejected by saying: “[...] But when two lands are at war, if we give Champa weapons, it means we are helping you to fight against [Annam]. This is indeed not the principle of pacifying and soothing [the people]”. The source is based on *Taizu Shilu* 67.1260–61 (Hongwu 4, 7th month, yihai day: Sept. 4, 1371). Foon Ming Liew turned my attention on this important episode. Geoff Wade has translated the chapter on Annam from *Mingshi*, see Wade 2003, 1–21.

¹¹⁷ Quoted from SUN 2003: 501.

¹¹⁸ This word may derive at least partially from the Chinese word *pao*, cannon. See SUN 2003: 508.

¹¹⁹ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 80–81; CMC-TPCM 1971: 52–53; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 110–11.

¹²⁰ SUN 2003: 508.

in gunpowder technology over her rival Ayutthaya, which enabled her to successfully repel numerically superior Siamese forces repeatedly.¹²¹ This advantage, if it really existed, might have come to an end after 1517, when “the Portuguese began supplying European-style firearms that were superior in range and accuracy to anything hitherto available”, as Lieberman argues.¹²² In the long run the serious loss of manpower, notably after the Sukhothai-Si Satchanalai region had fallen permanently under Siamese rule, was the crucial factor that contributed to the almost inevitable political decline of Lan Na vis-à-vis Ayutthaya. Given the advantages that Ayutthaya’s territory and population, as well as economic resources, were much larger than those of Lan Na, it seems quite astonishing as to how long the Tai Yuan kingdom was able to resist the “Southerners”. Without the military technology provided indirectly by Ming China this achievement would hardly have been feasible.

In the early 16th century Lan Na was still holding out. Possibly in order to give new vigour to his reign after a series of military setbacks, King Müang Kaeo underwent a re-coronation ceremony (*sam ratchaphisek* ชำราชาภิเศก) at the age of 39.¹²³ The ceremony, performed probably on 28 October 1520, was attended by numerous citizens of Chiang Mai who enjoyed various entertainments in the courtyard in front of the royal palace (*khuang luang* ข้างหลวง). Five years later, on 7 February 1526,¹²⁴ Müang Kaeo died as a victim of an epidemic.¹²⁵

4. Decline and Fall (1515–1558)

The reign of King Müang Kaeo marked the heyday of Lan Na’s political power and her cultural blossom, but at the same time also the beginning of her ruin. The almost incessant military confrontations with Ayutthaya since the beginning of the 16th century had resulted in losses of population that seriously weakened the power base of the king. In the year 1508, a Siamese army conquered Phrae; the troops from Nan repulsed the invaders but suffered many casualties.¹²⁶ The embittered fighting for Lampang between the Yuan and Siamese lasted seven years. In the final stage of Müang Kaeo’s reign the war losses had reached a critical point. In 1523 the King was involved in a conflict of succession in Chiang Tung. Both of the local princes competing for the throne sought for military help from Lan Na and Saen Wi. More than 20,000 soldiers were mobilised from various regions of Lan Na in support of the prince who was friendly to Chiang Mai. The expedition to Chiang Tung ended in a military disaster. Five high-ranking generals, including the governors of Chiang Rai and Müang Nai, were killed.¹²⁷ “The Yuan fled to the south, numerous Yuan soldiers

¹²¹ Ibid.: 513.

¹²² LIEBERMAN 2003: 257.

¹²³ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 106–107; CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 149.

¹²⁴ Corresponds to the tenth day of the waxing moon in the fifth month of the year C.S. 887.

¹²⁵ The King is reported of having suffered from “a disease with vomiting” (*rok acian* โรคอาเจียน). See CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 108; CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 151. Another source mentions the eating of poisoned horse meat as the cause of his death. See PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 372.

¹²⁶ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 104; CMC-TPCM 1971: 69; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 59; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 146.

¹²⁷ CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 62; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 150–51; cf. PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 370–71.

fell, and a large number of elephants and horses were lost”, reports the *Chiang Tung Chronicle*, and it continues, “Saen Ñi suffered a defeat and fled to Chiang Saen. Phaña Ñòt Chiang Rai had Saen Ñi executed in Chiang Saen and appointed Cao Chiang Khòng the Governor of Phañak.”¹²⁸ In the period between 1515 and 1523, not less than ten high-ranking aristocrats of Lan Na lost their lives in wars.¹²⁹ These losses could not have remained without consequences on the political stability of the country.

Besides the military defeats in the last decade of the reign of Müang Kaeo, which in particular contributed to a serious lack of able-bodied men, the population suffered additional losses from natural calamities. In the year before the death of Müang Kaeo, the Ping river flooded its banks after heavy rainfalls and inundated a large part of the city of Chiang Mai. “Countless people were drown in the flood and died”, remarks the chronicler.¹³⁰ As a result of hygienic conditions perhaps even much more inhabitants died of epidemics.

King Müang Kaeo passed away leaving no son behind him. The Privy Council elected Müang Kaeo’s younger brother Ket as successor on 5 February 1526.¹³¹ The new king was previously the governor of Müang Nòi, which seems to have been a relatively unimportant frontier *müang* to the west of Lan Na inhabited by Shan. He obviously did not have his own dynastic power base (*Hausmacht*) in Chiang Mai. His as a whole weak and uneventful reign ushered in an era of political crises; the control of the capital over the outer regions declined. In September/October 1535, the governor of Lampang together with two high-ranking officials plotted a coup d’état, which, however, was discovered just in time. The king had the ringleaders of the revolt executed. Three years later his luck ran out; in 1538 Tao Cai (Tao Sai Kham), Ket’s own son, took over the throne and sent his father into exile to Müang Nòi.¹³²

The new king likewise did not possess a significant dynastic power base, and a controversial decision on personnel, viz. the nomination of a new governor of Chiang Saen, led to his fall. The same coalition of dignitaries who had helped the king to come to power plotted his fall in 1543. Tao Cai was accused of severe abuse of his authority: “[The King] lost his mind. He harassed the population unscrupulously”.¹³³ The hatred for the ruler was so great that the people had him executed. Ket returned from exile and ascended the throne once again. However, in his second reign no success was achieved, for already in 1545 Ket was assassinated by aristocratic

¹²⁸ CTC-PMCT, THAWI 1990: 44.

¹²⁹ SARASWADEE 1986: 38.

¹³⁰ Quoted from CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; see also CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 108.

¹³¹ It was the 8th day of the waning moon in the 5th month of the *dap lao* year, C. S. 887. CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 108; CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 63. According to Notton’s translation, it was the 8th day of the 7th month of the year *dap lao*. It seems that there is a reader’s mistake for the Northern Thai number 5 and 7 look rather similar. See CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 151. JKM (RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 184) give the “the 5th day of the month Visākha” (the 8th month of the Northern Thai calendar) of the year C.S. 888, namely April 16, 1526, as the date of the death of the monarch.

¹³² Some manuscripts mention the exile of Ket Cetthalat to Nan (see SRI 81.088.05.082: *Nangsü pün müang ciang hai ciang saen*, f° 9 [tr. ปงพระเมืองเกตหือไปอยู่เมืองนาน]) or to Müang Nai (see SRI 81.069.05.038–038: *Lamdap latchakun wongsa nai müang lan na*, f° 13). The *Mingshi-lu* suggests that Ket’s forced abdication already occurred one year earlier, in 1537, as in November 1537 a new “ruler of Lan Na” asked the Chinese emperor for recognition as legitimate vassal king. This request was granted. See WINAI 1996: 150.

¹³³ Quoted from PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 380; see also CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 109; CMC-TPCM 1971: 72; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 64; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 153.

conspirators in front of the royal palace. The background of this action is not to be reflected in the written record. With regards to the two reigns of King Ket the chronicles mention only that the king participated in a magnificent royal bark procession on the occasion of the ordination of monks who belonged to the sect of Wat Pa Daeng.¹³⁴

After the violent death of the last two kings, Lan Na was plunged into chaos and anarchy for five years. The aristocrats of the country were divided into two factions along the country's east-west axis. The nobility in Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Chiang Tung formed a western group, whereas in the east of Lan Na the governors of Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen and Lampang made a united counter-coalition. At first, Saen Khao, son of the governor of Chiang Khòng and a leading head of the aristocratic conspirators against Ket Cetthalat, took the initiative. He offered the crown to the ruler of Chiang Tung, who declined to accept. Thereupon the ruler (*cao fa* เจ้าฟ้า) of Müang Nai was asked. He in fact gave his consent, "but did not turn up in Chiang Mai on time".¹³⁵ Meanwhile, a meeting of the counter-coalition had been held in Chiang Saen. The aristocrats who convened there decided to offer the crown of Lan Na to Settha Wangso, the just 14-year-old son of the Lao king Phothisarath.¹³⁶ Lan Sang under Phothisarath (r. 1520–1548) had developed into the dominant political and cultural power in the upper Mekong region. Since the end of the 15th century, learned monks from Lan Na had spread the "orthodox" Buddhism of the "Lan Na School", which had reached its heyday under Tilok, to Laos. The exemplary character of the Buddhist scholarship of Chiang Mai shaped Lan Sang profoundly in the first half of the 16th century. King Phothisarath, who took a daughter of King Ket Kao as his consort,¹³⁷ regarded himself after the death of his father-in-law and the onset of the fall of Lan Na as the protector of those religious and cultural ideals which bound the Yuan and Lao with each other.¹³⁸

In the meantime, the threat to Chiang Mai increased. An army from Saen Wi emerged in front of the gate of Chiang Mai and demanded vengeance for the death of King Ket Cetthalat, who obviously had a lot of followers among the Shan.¹³⁹ Although the assailants were repulsed, they withdrew to Lamphun and called for help from the Siamese troops from the Sukhothai region. In the meanwhile, the troops of the counter-coalition from Chiang Saen arrived at the capital and had the conspirators around Saen Khao executed for having committed regicide. In order to prevent further anarchy the opposing alliance placed the princess as regent. She was to remain in

¹³⁴ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 109; CMC-TPCM 1971: 72; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 64; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 153; see also PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 380.

¹³⁵ Quoted from CMC-TPCM 1971: 72.

¹³⁶ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 109; CMC-TPCM 1971: 72; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 64; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 153; PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 381.

¹³⁷ The marriage of Phothisarath and Nang Nòt Khan took place around 1532/33. The dynastic connection of Lan Na with the relatively stronger Lan Sang served as, from the view point of Chiang Mai, reinsurance against the attempts of the Siamese expansion, but could also, from the perspective of Ayutthaya, be regarded as an encirclement aimed against Siam. See also DORÉ 1987: 738.

¹³⁸ Was it a surprise that a section of the political elite of Lan Na, in particular those of the border zones in the north-east adjacent to Lan Sang, looked towards Luang Prabang and saw in Settha Wangso, the grandson of Müang Kaeo, as the suitable heir apparent? On the development of Lan Sang in the beginning of the 16th century see SILA 1964: 46–54.

¹³⁹ Probably the attackers had the direct support of the Burmese king as the Lao sources claimed. See SAVENG 1987: 56.

office until Settha Wangso arrived in Chiang Mai. Further attacks of the Shan were repulsed, and with the Siamese likewise a *modus vivendi* was found after suffering heavy losses in fighting.¹⁴⁰

The Lao crown prince arrived on 10 May 1546¹⁴¹ at Chiang Saen, stayed there for three weeks and travelled in triumphal procession via Chiang Rai to Chiang Mai, where he arrived on 18 June of the same year.¹⁴² Two weeks later, on 2 July¹⁴³ Settha Wangso was enthroned as the King of Lan Na and he married the two daughters of the late ruler. However, Settha Wangso only resided in Chiang Mai for two years, not long enough to find a decisive solution for the disrupted country with the help of his advisors. When the young ruler of Lan Na learned of the death of his father, King Phothisarath, he left Chiang Mai on 8 August 1548¹⁴⁴ and rushed to Luang Prabang, where he had to suppress a rebellion of the aristocracy.¹⁴⁵ He took the Phra Kaeo, a legendary Buddhist image made of jade (“The Emerald Buddha”),¹⁴⁶ with him. After his coronation in Luang Prabang Settha Wangso ruled as King (Saiña) Setthathilat [Setthathirat] in personal union over two kingdoms, Lan Na and Lan Sang. Due to his absence in Chiang Mai, the fire of the civil war in Lan Na rekindled. In 1549, the troops from Phrae and Laos (Lan Sang) launched an attack, without success, on Chiang Mai.¹⁴⁷

As the chronicler remarks, for three years “a period of great discord” prevailed.¹⁴⁸ It was a period without a ruler, a *de facto* interregnum. Not until at the

¹⁴⁰ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 110–13; CMC-TPCM 1971: 72–74; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 64–67; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 153–57; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 381–86.

Queen Cilapapha recognised the sovereignty of Ayutthaya and sent tributary gifts to Siamese king. See MS, Hundius Collection: *Piin wongsa mahakhasat tanglai* [...], f° 56.

¹⁴¹ On the 7th day [Saturday], the 10th day of the waxing moon in the 9th month of the year C.S. 908. The day however fell on a Monday.

¹⁴² On the 4th day [Wednesday], the 5th day of the waning moon in the 10th month of the year C.S. 908. The day however fell on a Friday.

¹⁴³ On the 4th day [Wednesday], the 4th day of the waxing moon in the 11th month of the year C.S. 908. The day, however, fell on a Friday.

¹⁴⁴ On the 5th day of the waxing moon in the 12th month of the year *poek san*, C.S. 910. Several versions of CMC (such as CMC-TPCM and CMC-N) give the year C.S. 909; but all versions correspond with the year the 60 years cycle. The *poek san* year is the “year of monkey, the 10th year of the decade” and could only be C.S. 910.

The Lao sources deviate from the dating of the Northern Thai chronicles by only two years. They give 1550 as the year of the death of King Phothisarath and claim that Settha Wangso [later Setthathilat] arrived in Chiang Mai in 1548. See SILA 1964: 52–55.

¹⁴⁵ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 114; CMC-TPCM 1971: 75; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 68; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 158; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 388–89. The rebellious aristocrats, “military commander of the southern wing” (พวกเสนาฝ่ายใต้), wanted to help a half brother of the crown prince to be on the throne. See SILA 1964: 55.

¹⁴⁶ According to one legend, in 1464 the lightning struck at a figure of a Buddha made of gypsum in a pagoda in Chiang Mai. The figure broke and a sitting Buddha made from one whole piece of jade came to light. The Jade Buddha first found its home in Chiang Rai and from 1486 onwards in Chiang Mai. Since then it was a sort of palladium, a function, which it also served after 1548 in Laos until the Siamese after suppressing the uprising of Cao Anu (1828) brought it to Bangkok where until today it is still placed in Wat Phra Kaeo in front of the royal palace. On the history of the Emerald Buddha until it was brought away to Luang Prabang see SRI 80.047.05.019–019: “Tamnan pha müang kaeo”.

¹⁴⁷ See CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 115; CMC-TPCM 1971: 75; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 159.

¹⁴⁸ CMC-TPCM 1971: 75 [เกิดเป็นกสิยุดมากนั้ก].

beginning of 1551 did Setthathilat officially abdicate in favour of his queen Cilapapha. It is not clear whether Cilapapha indeed ascended the throne the second time and ruled until 1553 as the Lao sources claim.¹⁴⁹ Anyhow the Northern Thai chronicles report unanimously that immediately after the abdication of the Lao ruler in Chiang Mai the Privy Council held a meeting. The Privy Council, to which also the *sangkharat*, the leader of the *saṅgha* of Chiang Mai, belonged, did not comply with Setthathilat's wishes; on the contrary they elected Mae Ku, a prince of Müang Nai, to be the new king. He was a descendant of one branch of the Mangrai Dynasty, which could be traced back to Mangrai's son Khüa.¹⁵⁰ "The Chiang Rai Chronicle" reports that Mae Ku "had fled and entered monkhood in Müang Nai". Concerning the more exact circumstances of his ordination, no information is provided in the sources. Thus it would have been interesting to know from whom Mae Ku had to run away to Müang Nai (fleeing from his rivals in Chiang Mai?). Or did Mae Ku enter the monastery only after he had been elected king? In this rather unlikely case, one is tempted to suggest that the new ruler of Lan Na wanted to improve his royal reputation by means of the religious merits he had to acquire beforehand. Mae Ku arrived in Chiang Mai on 21 May 1551¹⁵¹ and on 22 December 1551¹⁵² was solemnly enthroned.¹⁵³

Despite taking the trouble to tighten up the administration of the land, Mae Ku failed to get a new start. In mid-May 1552, the rulers (*cao fa* เจ้าฟ้า) of Müang Nai and Chiang Thòng turned up in front of the gates of Chiang Rai with a powerful army. Reinforced by troops of the governor of Fang, the two Shan princes conquered Chiang Rai and shortly thereafter Chiang Saen as well. The motives of the attackers and their relations to the new king, who also came from Müang Nai, were unclear. The ruler of Müang Nai, the leader of the invasion force, could have aimed at the territorial and political expansion of his own principality.¹⁵⁴ It is possible that a secret pact was concluded with King Mae Ku to impair Setthathilat's supporters, who were deeply rooted in Chiang Saen and Chiang Rai. This idea seems not at all absurd in view of the background of later events. In the year 1555, Setthathilat, who could not accept that the deprivation of the power of princess Cilapapha, once more laid claim to the throne of Chiang Mai. An army from Luang Prabang, in which also many Lü fought, was sent to re-conquer Lan Na. Chiang Saen fell, indeed after combats suffering heavy casualties, at the hands of the Lao, but a further advance of Setthathilat was blocked by stiff resistance of Shan troops from Müang Nai.¹⁵⁵

The effective sphere of influence of Mae Ku did not extend far beyond the core region of Chiang Mai and Lamphun, and it is revealing that the Chinese sources

¹⁴⁹ SILA 1964: 56.

¹⁵⁰ Phün müang chiang rai, SARASWADEE 1993: 49 [f° 17 in original text]. The concerned text reads: tr. [...] ท้าวแม่กุอันเปนเชื้อราชวงศ์หนี่โพบวดอยู่เมืองน่าย.

¹⁵¹ On the 4th day of the waxing moon in the 9th month of the year C.S. 913.

¹⁵² On the 10th day of the waxing moon in the 4th month of the year C.S. 913.

¹⁵³ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 115; CMC-TPCM 1971: 76; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 69; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 160; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 391.

¹⁵⁴ First of all this very likely view is represented by SARASWADEE 1988: 14.

¹⁵⁵ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 116; CMC-TPCM 1971: 76; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 70; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 160–61; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 391; SILA 1964: 56–57. The reports in the Northern Thai and in the Lao sources stating that the Lao troops remained for a longer period are identical. Setthathilat raised Chiang Saen to the status of royal harbour of Lan Sang. The control over the coastal stripes on middle Mekong slipped [through the fingers of] Chiang Mai and was lost permanently.

called Chiang Saen, during the period of the Jiajing reign (1552–1566), the “Kingdom of the Lesser Eight Hundred [Daughters-in law] (Xiao Babai), namely a political unit independent from Chiang Mai.¹⁵⁶ One manuscript even mentions that in the year C.S. 917 (1555/56 AD.) “King Mae Ku marched with an army [out to battle], but failed to capture Lampang”.¹⁵⁷ The text does not give any clue why Mae Ku launched an attack on Lampang. Was it because there was unrest, which was perhaps connected to the fighting for Chiang Saen? A year later, in 1556/57, Mae Ku must have brought the situation in Lampang under his control, because the king consecrated a relic in the monastery of Phra Mahathat Lampang.

Burma under King Bayin-naung (r. 1551–1581) had set about to establish a great Buddhist empire and to subjugate all her eastern and southern neighbours. Almost without resistance, Lan Na fell to the Burmese invaders. After a siege of only three days, Chiang Mai capitulated on April 2, 1558;¹⁵⁸ within a few months, Lan Na was completely overrun by Burmese troops.¹⁵⁹ The Burmese were surprised that they encountered in Chiang Mai — in contrast to the likewise conquered Shan regions — almost no resistance:

In the year C.S. 920 [1558/59 AD] the king gained victory over all the big and small lands, namely the land of the Shan as well as the land of the Lao and the land of the Yuan in Chiang Mai. However, Chiang Mai did not put up a fight; her ruler came out and offered his submission.¹⁶⁰

Which were the deeper causes of Lan Na’s fall that were responsible for the loss of her independence? How far can these causes be dated back? Even the contemporaries gave no rational explanation in a modern sense. They saw first of all that it was the work of the spirits and demons in taking revenge for severe violation of ritual prescriptions (NT: *khüit*). But economic and ecological reasons were known as well, even if they were mostly mentioned as atypical incidents. A chronicle summarises the complex causes in eleven points: ¹⁶¹

Cause 1: The corpses of the deceased would be removed from the Cang Phüak Gate and — taking a crescent — brought to the Hua Lin corner thereby destroying the *ayu müang*.¹⁶² Moreover, one did not allow that respect

¹⁵⁶ *Mingshi gao*, Chapter 189, LIEW n.d.: 37.

¹⁵⁷ [เจ้าแม่กุยก คำสั่ง โปเอาเมืองลคอรบได้]. See MS, Hundius Collection: *Phün wongsa mahakhasat tanglai* [...], f° 57.

¹⁵⁸ The siege began on Wednesday, on the 11th day of the waxing moon in the 7th month, the New Year day of the year C.S. 920, viz. on March 30, 1558. In fact it was not on the 12th but on the 11th day of the month Caitra. Here I follow the tables and procedure of calculation of Eade.

¹⁵⁹ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 118; CMC-TPCM 1971: 78; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 73; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 164; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 397.

¹⁶⁰ *Maharachawong phongsawadan phama* 2002: 67.

¹⁶¹ SRI 82.112.05.091–091: *Tamnan mae ku müang lan cang taek*, ff° 18–20; see also SRI 85.144.05.136: *Tamnan lan na lan chang*, ff° 20–23. Compare also with the related and already transcribed manuscript *Tamnan pün müang lan na ciang mai*, SRI 1981: 17–22 [ff° 15–17 in original manuscripts].

¹⁶² Literally “Life of the Town”, to which the Monastery Cet Yòt (Ñòt) in the northwest of the city of Chiang Mai is referred. See SARASWADEE 1995.

was paid to the two Phaña Cang Phüak and to the two Phaña Latcasi in the north of the city by sprinkling them with sacred water.¹⁶³

- Cause 2: Around the old *wiang* a new *wiang* was built, which like Rāhu encircled the [old] *wiang*.¹⁶⁴
- Cause 3: In the city three sacrificial shrines, like the one of *cedi*, were constructed.¹⁶⁵
- Cause 4: The [entire] population caused damages to the Nòng Bua Hok Kò (pond).¹⁶⁶ They scooped the water until the pond was dried up. The people went out and barricaded Huai Kaeo (a streamlet in Chiang Mai).¹⁶⁷
- Cause 5: In the southern part of the town a monastery was constructed.¹⁶⁸
- Cause 6: The wood for coffins was thrown away (i.e. burned along with the corpses) and then used anew (in the country).¹⁶⁹
- Cause 7: The corpses of the deceased were taken and ceremoniously burned within the confines of the city.¹⁷⁰
- Cause 8: The corpses of the deceased were taken and they were burned by the water [bank of the Ping] on sand banks and in the monasteries.¹⁷¹
- Cause 9: All the inhabitants were prohibited to offer sacrifices to the guardian spirits of the city as well as to sacrifice the Inthakhin-Stone-pillars,¹⁷² the six *kumbhara*, *pu sae* and *ya sae*,¹⁷³ as well as [the spirits] in the hills of the North and the South.¹⁷⁴
- Cause 10: From the ninth to twelfth month [May/June to August/September] the inhabitants were recruited to cut down the trees, from the crown to the stump. The [tree trunks] were to be sawn into pieces of one *wa* [c. 2 m] in length and then they were to be dragged to the river. Those who dodged [the work] would be sentenced to death. [The people] must

163 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/1–2: tr. เปรตพลมถวร 1 นันด้วยอันเอาชอรผี ออกทั้งปตุช้างเผือก แลเกี้ยว ไฟทั้งแจงหัวรินยาอายุเมิง แลโนพระยาข้างเผือก 2 ตัวหัวเวียงแลพระราชสี 2 ตัวหัวเวียงนัน มั่นพอคืบหือไฟพอบรมสรรสรง ได้แล.

164 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/3: tr. เปรตถวร 2 นันด้วยสังเวียงใหม่อมเวียงเกล้าหือเปนองคราหุคาบ เวียงนันแล.

165 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/3: tr. เปรตถวร 3 นันด้วยกอกูเหมือนเจดีนันไว้กับเมิง 3 แห่งนันแล.

166 Literally meaning “Lake of the six groups of Lotus plants”.

167 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/3–4: tr. เปรตถวร 4 นันด้วยหือคนทั้งหลายไพกวรศรีหนองบัว 6 กอนัน คีขางนำเสียว หือแหง ห้วยแกวคี่หือคนไฟตืดเสียวนันแล.

168 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/4: tr. เปรตถวร 5 นันด้วยสังวัดไวยก้อเวียงหลัง 1 มีทั้งวันออกแจง ไตโยเวียงนันแล.

169 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/4–5: tr. เปรตถวร 6 นันด้วยไม้โรงผินันเอาไฟพุม แล้วพ้อย ว่าเกบเอาเข้า มาบ้านมาเมืองแล.

170 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 18/5: tr. เปรตถวร 7 นันด้วยเอาชอรผีสงสะกานเผ้าโนบ้านโน เมืองแล.

171 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, ff° 18/5–19/1: tr. เปรตถวร 8 นันเอาชอรผีไฟสงสะกานเผ้ายัง น้ำแลเกาะชาย แลยังวัดนันแล.

172 They apply to the three most important sites of Chiang Mai: the relic of the Monastery Dòi Suthep (พระธาตุเจ้าสุเทพ), the relics of des Phra Kaeo (พระแก้ว) and of Phra Sing (พระสิง) and the Inthakhin-Pillars (เสาหินอินทขิล). Moreover, two Albino-Elephants and the two royal lions, which are within the city walls, are to be mentioned (tr. พระยาข้างเผือกสองตัวหัวเวียงแลพระราชสีสองตัวหัวเวียง). Further luck promising animals are the six elephants of the Maha Cedi Luang and the two Phaña Kho in the lower part [namely in the south] of the city of Chiang Mai (tr. พระยาพญะไผ 2 ตัวอยู่ใต้เวียง). See SRI 85.144.05.136: “Tamnan lan na lan cang”, ff° 4–5.

173 Guardian spirits of the Lua, to which the Yuan inhabitants of Chiang Mai offered sacrifices.

174 MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 19/1: tr. เปรตถวร 9 ด้วยห้อมคนทั้งหลายบหือไฟเสียง บริกัมมบุชาแกมเสียง ยังเทพพตาอารักเกณบ้านเกณเมือง แลเสาหินอินทขินกแลกมภัรทั้ง 6 คนแล ปุสะยาสะตอยเหนือตอยใต้คี่หาม เสียบหือโดยไฟเสียงนันแล.

work day and night to cut down the trees of the forests. The cutting down of the trees and transporting them lasted incessantly, that means one cut the big trees from the ninth to the new moon of the twelfth month, until the work was stopped. Between the fifth and eighth month [January/February to April/May] the forest workers rested. It was so every year. The wood drifting on the river destroyed the dams on the banks. The people had to restore [the dams]. After some time the dams eroded again. Nobody could plough the fields and transplant the seedlings. No matter in which river or in which stream nowhere could the inhabitants find water [to irrigate] the rice-fields. Further cutting down the trees was prohibited.¹⁷⁵

Cause 11: The king entrusted scoundrels to collect the taxes. They were all very busy to extract money from the people of the *müang*. Whatever they found was carried away.¹⁷⁶

Seven out of the eleven above-mentioned causes are related to violation of ritual regulations, but Cause 4 and Cause 10 cite the unrestrained exploitation of natural resources of the land as the causal factor. The drying up of the Huai Kaeo and other flowing waters hampered the drinking water supply of the town. Moreover, the unscrupulous cutting down of the trees in the forests (deforestation) in areas further away from Chiang Mai city had upset the ecological equilibrium in the plain of the Ping river and, perhaps, also have led to a reduction in rice production.¹⁷⁷

The construction of “a new *wiang* near the old one” (cause 2) obviously refers to the complete renovation of the outer walls of Chiang Mai around 1517. At about the same time, Lamphun got a new brick wall. Three years later the monastery, which was under the patronage of the king, was renovated.

These were two extravagant religious and secular construction projects, which caused a heavy burden to the royal budget and the population of Lan Na. The labourers and estates, which were donated for the maintenance of the monasteries, as well as other religious motivated taxes, were at least partially lost in the productive sector of the economy. Damages that were limited to natural catastrophes also gave rise to great deficits in national finance. In 1530/31 a fire destroyed the new royal palace which was built by Müang Kaeo. A year later, in February/March 1532, a conflagration broke out at Ban Ta Pae near Chiang Mai. The affected population obtained from King Ket, the queen and the queen’s mother compensation amounting to 20,000 *ngoen*.¹⁷⁸ Müang Kaeo and his successor tried to solve the financial problems by increasing taxes (Cause 11) as well as by monetary manipulation. The

¹⁷⁵ MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, f° 19/2–5: tr. เหตุถวรสิบนัคนันคั้นถึง เดิน 9 เดิน สิบ เดินสิบเอ็ด เดินสิบสอง คีเกนคานคนทงหลายไฟฟืนไม้ต๊ะเคล้าต๊ะปายยาววาเอาไม้ว่า หือคนทงหลายไพรากหือแมวน่า ผู้ใดหวิดคีเอาโทษ ถานตายหือรองมาทงวันทงคินฟืนรากทงวันไมหนอยบเอาหือ ฟืนไม้หือย แต่เดิน 9 ออกถึงเดินสิบ 12 ดับ จึงจะเลิก ออกมาอยู่ยังบาน ไนยาน เดิน 5–6–7–8 นั้น คีบฟืนเชื่อนันคูปลีหั้นแล ไมอันเขาร่องมานันคีมาทกนั คนทงหลาย ปล่านเอาใส่ย นานันค้อยาดหลุฟังไฟ คนทงหลายคีบโดยไถนาแลหวานกล้าวักปลีหั้นแล นำแม่โดยห้วยโดย คนทง หลายบ่เอานำมาใส่เนาโดยนั้นำห้วยนัมนั้นมันคีบหือคนไฟฟืนทั้นนแล.

¹⁷⁶ MS, SRI 82.112.05.091–091, ff° 19/5–20/1: tr. เหตุถวร 11 นันด้วยมหาราชเจ้ามี อาชญาหือคนพาล ไพเกบส่วยไล รำรันประหมารไพรผ้าเข้าเมืองหาสั่งจักออกจักเสีย คีบโดยเข้าคินัง โหนโหนแล.

¹⁷⁷ In the manuscripts there are several indications on the outbreak of famines (NT.: *tupphikkhaphaya* ทุพภิกขภัยะ) around mid-16th century. See also SRI 85.144.05.136: *Tamnan lan na lan cang*, f° 15/1–2, 17/4, 19/4–20/1, and SRI 82.112.05.091–091: *Tamnan mae ku müang lan cang taek*, f° 15/2–3.

¹⁷⁸ MS, Hundius Collection: *Phün wongsa mahakhasat tanglai* [...], f° 53.

result of it was an inflationary development, which must have grave consequences for the autarky agrarian society of Lan Na, as Hans Penth comments:

Within about 30 years, there seems to have occurred a rising of prices, an inflation, of over 40% which must have been a serious problem for a ‘national economy’ that was mainly based on agriculture for local consumption but not without an ‘industry’ and internal and external trade. People at that time did not at all gasp what happened to the ‘value of their money’ and thought that the spirits were angry or that the conjunction of the stars was not good.¹⁷⁹

The empirical foundation for this thesis, which looks obvious at first glance, is nevertheless weak. Penth refers to Notton’s remark that a variation of the CMC [a manuscript differing from that on which his translation was based] mentions the manipulation of the weights and the systematic devaluation of the cowrie currency by several of the kings of Lan Na. According to Notton, Müang Kaeo (r. 1495–1526) devalued the currency from 100 units to 98 [units]. Among his successors, Ket (r. 1526–1538) devaluated it to 80, Tao Cai to 70 and Mae Ku (r. 1551–1564) finally to 58 units.¹⁸⁰ We do not know which manuscript Notton had relied upon. However, Saraswadee Ongsakul recently discovered a *phapsa* manuscript from the monastery Pa Lan (District San Kamphaeng, Chiang Mai) that confirms Notton’s statement:

[...] The aristocrats and the officials should not act wrongly by ruining the foundations of their country. There are three points to be mentioned: They destroyed the “Thousand Basis”. [...] Moreover, they devalued the *bia* (cowrie currency) by reducing the value of 100 but issued and spent it as 100. The three reasons meant a breaking of taboos (*khüt*). Our country will be in shambles. It happened as follows: Pha Müang Kaeo fixed [the rate] that 98 *bia* should be the value of 100 *bia*. Tao Ai Kao [Phañ Ket] decided that 80 *bia* should be the value of 100 *bia*. Tao Cai defined that 70 *bia* should be the value of 100 *bia*. Tao Upañño [Setthathilat] decreed that 60 *bia* should have the value of 100 *bia*. Pha Mae Ku fixed the value for 58 *bia* to be 100 *bia*. Because of the three reasons the rulers and the land were ruined. If less than 10,000 [*bia*] are raised to 10,000 [*bia*]; if less than 1,000 [*bia*] are raised to 1,000 [*bia*]; if less than 100 [*bia*] are raised to 100 [*bia*], this surely will lead to total destruction.¹⁸¹

The manuscript confirms the systematic devaluation of the cowrie currency by a total of 42% within half a century.¹⁸² While analysing Northern Thai Pāli manuscripts,

¹⁷⁹ PENTH 1994b: 23.

¹⁸⁰ NOTTON 1932: 164, fn. 5.

¹⁸¹ The quotation is taken from f° 29 of a manuscript with the non-authentic title *prawattisat, kotmai boran* [ประวัติศาสตร์, กฎหมายโบราณ]. See SARASWADEE 1996: 208. The quotation in the exact wording reads: “tr. [...] ท้าวพระญาเสนาอามาตย์ บัควรดีลิตมังสีมาบ้าน เมืองอันใหญ่หนักแท้ มี 3 ประการ คือมังหลักพัน 1 มังใสเมือง 2 ที่ อันหนึ่งลัดเบี่ยลง ห้อยอันเสียร้อยนับว่าห้อยร้อย เหตุ 3 ประการนี้ซัด แพ้ตัว แพ้บ้านแพ้เมือง เบนตั้ง พระเมืองแก้ว แต่งเบี่ย 98 ห้อยเปน 100 ท้าวอายุเกล้า แต่งเบี่ย 80 เบน 100 ท้าวชาย แต่งเบี่ย 70 เบน 100 ท้าวอุบโย แต่งเบี่ย 60 เบน 100 พระแม่กุ แต่งเบี่ย 58 ห้อยเปน 100 เหตุ 3 ประการนี้ แพ้เจ้าเมืองแพ้บ้านเมืองแล อัน ไต่ก็ตี บัพพอนหมื่นว่าหมื่น บัพพ 1,000 ว่า 1,000 บัพพ 100 ว่า 100 ย่อมห้อยวินาศนิบหายแล[...]”

¹⁸² Obviously the amount referred to as “100 *bia*” mentioned in the above quotation represents the fixed point of the beginning of each devaluation. Not completely excluded is the textual reading, that the amount referred to as “100 *bia*” represents the original value of the cowrie currency before

Oskar von Hinüber came across colophons in which the prices of producing the respective manuscript were given. Sometimes even the cost of the materials (e.g., the price for a bundle of palm leaves) and the worker's wage were differentiated. Von Hinüber draws the conclusion that the prices of the materials between the years 1531/32 and 1588 had increased by 25 times, whereas the worker's wages had dropped slightly.¹⁸³ As the data which von Hinüber used for his calculation were taken from only eight manuscripts, four of which came from a single monastery (Wat Si Bun Rüang), his conclusion is based on weak statistical evidence. His basic idea of locating socio-economic data from the colophons of Northern Thai manuscripts, however, seems very promising. Extensive analyses of the colophons of numerous more manuscripts that are still awaiting evaluation might produce fruitful results.

As for the decline of the economy and the political disintegration of Lan Na during the three decades after the death of Müang Kaeo, the monarch's weak successors or the selfishness of the aristocrats alone cannot entirely explain the disaster. None of the five kings who ruled Lan Na after 1526 died as a reigning sovereign. They were either deposed, forced to abdicate, or murdered. Such great turbulences at the highest level of state leadership would have shaken even the most stable society, with lasting consequences as well. On the other hand, the question for the reasons of the fragile structures of state and society in Lan Na is legitimate; these were weaknesses, virulent long before the eventual fall of Chiang Mai, but simmering in the "golden age" of the kings Trilok and Müang Kaeo under a splendid surface. Was it a coincidence that the rash downfall of Lan Na was preceded by the reign of Müang Kaeo promoting ambitious religious projects (construction of monasteries, donations of Buddha images, making duplicates of the Pāli canon, etc.)?¹⁸⁴ How indisputable was the political and economic control by the state centre personified by the king? The internal structure of the Lan Na polity, which hitherto has hardly been discussed, shall be the focus of the subsequent presentations.

5. Centre and Periphery

The historical frontiers of Lan Na, which at least under the reign of King Mae Ku in the mid-16th century still ideally existed, is depicted in one Northern Thai Chronicles as follows:

The realm of the King, the ruler of Lan Na-Chiang Mai, borders in the south on the territory of Müang Rahaeng (Tak), in the east it on the Mekong, and to the west on the Salween.¹⁸⁵

the respective devaluations. In this — rather not likely — case the total inflation rate, according to calculation, is more than 81% [= 100% – (0,98 x 0,80 x 0,70 x 0,60 x 0,58 x 100%)].

¹⁸³ HINÜBER, VON 1991: 11.

¹⁸⁴ The following quotation taken from AUNG TWIN (1976: 231) on the thesis presented for the rise and fall of Pagan — change accordingly — may also be applied to the post Müang Kaeo era: "[Pagan's great King Aniruddha] had swon the seeds of self-destruction by making the *sangha* the main recipient for the flow of land and labour and thereby inviting the decentralisation of economic and political structures, a process which was to have serious repercussions for the state in the thirteenth century. By his actions he had created a new situation that his successors had to face — by changing — or perish."

¹⁸⁵ *Tamnan phün müang lan na chiang mai*, SRI 1981a: 3.

Another manuscript records the territorial demarcations of the Yuan kingdoms, albeit slightly differently:

The territory of Lan Na-Chiang Mai extended in the south to the land of the Lua. [...] To the east it bordered on the Mekong. To the north it extended as far as Müang Saen Nòi Saen Luang (south of Chiang Rung, V.G.).¹⁸⁶

The chronicle of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty, on the contrary, describes smaller confines of Nan Na, as given from the Chinese perspective around the mid-14th century, namely still before the incorporation of the principalities of Phrae and Nan.

In the east of the land [of Babai] is Laowo (Laos), in the south Bole barbarians (Sukhothai), in the west Da Gula (Pegu), in the north Menggen Prefecture (Müang Khün or Chiang Tung).¹⁸⁷

The territory marked by the Salween (in the west), the Mekong (in the East), by Tak (in the south) and Chiang Rung (in the north)¹⁸⁸ corresponds *cum grano salis* to the main regions of settlement of the tribal relatives of the Yuan, Khün and Lü, but also to the main regions of distribution of the Dharma script as well as the Buddhist monastic culture, which certainly includes these letters. Hence Lan Na was above all, and in particular, a cultural concept rather than a firmly connected state-political unit. Lan Na consisted of a few large and many smaller *müang* (polities), which were connected via intricately knitted relationships with one another and with the capital. The tightness and stability of relationships depended on several factors: size of population, economic potential, geographical location, historical characteristics and kinship relations of each individual *müang*.

The meaning of the term *müang* is associated with territorial and demographic dimensions of political rule. From the fact that a *müang* is constantly defined by its centre follow some important considerations: Two or more *müang* could “overlap” with one another. The border regions and transitional regions that are defined in such a way, possessed multiple loyalties and identities. However, it is also possible that a large *müang* included several smaller satellite *müang*. To take one example: “Müang Chiang Mai” first of all indicates the urban centre of the town, the *wiang*, and family units that lived within the city walls (fortifications of the town). In the broader sense the villages in the vicinity of Chiang Mai were included. In an even larger context, the meaning of *müang* Chiang Mai included most of the other *müang* of the Ping plain (in the centre of which “Wiang Chiang Mai” was located), such as Phrao, Chiang Dao, and Wiang Kum Kam. However, less often it includes also Lamphun (Hariphunchai), which was seeking to preserve its special religious and cultural role. Moreover, Chiang Mai as capital was the ritual and “cosmological” embodiment of the country as a whole. It is therefore not surprising that very often the Northern Thai chronicles

¹⁸⁶ SRI 85.144.05.136: *Tamnan lan na lan chang*, ff° 2/4–3/1. [tr. ฝ่ายกล้าไตทีกเมืองลัวะแห่งตัดไผวันตัก วันออก เปนแดนหันแล ฝ่ายกล้าวันออกทีกแม่ของเปนแดนหันแล ฝ่ายกล้าเหนือทีกเมืองแสนน้อยแสนหลวงเปนแดนหันแล]

¹⁸⁷ *Xin Yuanshi* 252.12–13 (Babai-xifu), LIEW n.d.: 12.

¹⁸⁸ At the end of the 13th century Tak belonged to Sukhothai and after its downfall surrendered to Ayutthaya. Henceforth, Tak, which was inhabited by the Yuan and Siamese of almost equal sections, became a northern outpost of Ayutthaya. The southern frontier zone of Lan Na runs along between Thoen (belong to Lampang) and Tak. Chiang Rung even under the kings Mangrai and Tilok was only a vassal of Chiang Mai and not regarded as a part of Nan Na.

use the expression “Müang Chiang Mai” as a *pars pro toto* for “Lan Na” and, at times, also the twin term “Müang Lan Na-Chiang Mai.”¹⁸⁹

In the following paragraphs the territorial structure of Lan Na with regards to the relationships of its constituent *müang* to the capital will be analysed. It will be differentiated in example of three zones. A simplified model identifies the core region, the outer zone and the vassal *müang*:

- a) The *core region*¹⁹⁰ was under the direct control of the king. It included the capital Chiang Mai and her satellite *müang*¹⁹¹, essentially the central part of the Ping river basin with Chiang Mai and Lamphun as the northern and southern corner points respectively. In this fertile and productive rice-cultivating region, one of the earliest urbanised parts of Lan Na, the population was probably the highest. The strategic importance of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun core region as commercial centres made the region even more attractive, placing it at an advantage over the other *müang*.¹⁹²

The king possessed in the region around the capital a direct disposal of the work force. Through the state officials appointed by the king himself the ruler was able to recruit the male subjects directly for construction works and enlist them for military service. Lamphun maintained her special cultural status until the end of the Mangrai dynasty. Most of the kings of Lan Na undertook pilgrimages to Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai.¹⁹³ The Northern Thai Chronicles, in particular the religious *tamnan*, often mention Chiang Mai and Lamphun together in the same breath, like in the following passage from the *Mūlasāsanā* chronicle: “Since the king and the population knew how to accumulate religious merit, good fortune and prosperity prevailed in Hariphunchai and Chiang Mai.”¹⁹⁴

- b) The OUTER ZONES adjacent to the core region consisted of *müang* that were ruled by sons, nephews, and other close relatives¹⁹⁵ or confidantes of the king.¹⁹⁶ As for which person the king chose to place in which *müang* as governor of his confidence, viz. “Lord of the domain” (*cao müang* เจ้าเมือง), it depended on the strategic importance and the political value of the symbol of the respective *müang*.

¹⁸⁹ Thus for example in the chronicle *Tamnan phün müang lan na chiang mai*, SRI 1981a.

¹⁹⁰ *Bòriwen kaen klang* บริเวณแกนกลาง), literally: “the central region forming the pivot”.

¹⁹¹ *Müang bòriwan* (เมืองบริวาร).

¹⁹² SARASWADEE 1988: 2. Deriving from Saraswadee are also the Siamese terms *bòriwen kaen klang* and *müang bòriwan*, which are not mentioned in Northern Thai sources.

¹⁹³ King Müang Kaeo after paying a visit to Wat Phrathat donated to the monastery land and 86 families as *kha wat*. See SRI 81.066.05.062: *Tamnan müang lapun*, f° 42.

¹⁹⁴ *Tamnan mūlasāsanā* 1970: 222.

¹⁹⁵ The “aristocrat of royal blood” (*cao nai chüa phrawong* เจ้านายเชื้อพระวงศ์).

¹⁹⁶ The present writer is unable to find a term in any Northern Thai source (chronicles as well as inscriptions) which adequately render the meaning of “outer zone” or “outer *müang*”. The most likely terms that he has come across are the terms *huamüang nòk* (หัวเมืองนอก) [*huamüang* = “Province”, *nòk* = “beyond”] used in the “Chronicle of Phayao”. However, the first part, *huamüang*, seems to be a Siamese loan word of the late 19th century and is not a genuine Northern Thai term. In most of the manuscripts the term *müang* in its simple form is used indiscriminately for all parts of Lan Na, regardless of her political dependency on the capital. In some manuscripts (such as the “Chronicle of Müang Yòng” the term *luk müang* (ลูกเมือง) [*luk*, here means: “descendant, offspring”] appears to be a term denoting satellite regions (*müang bòriwan* เมืองบริวาร) or also representing a dependent *müang*. See also UDOM 1991: 1144.

Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen, located in the old ancestral land of the Yuan were mostly ruled by the sons, preferably the eldest offspring of a king; whereas the governors of Phayao, Fang and Lampang were mostly nephews or younger uncles of the sovereign. In most cases the rulers of a few distinguished *müang* were not nobles descended from the line of the Mangrai Dynasty.¹⁹⁷

In the outer *müang* the king did not exert direct control over the free communities living there. The basic administrative units of a *müang*, the district (*panna* ปันนา, see chapter 6.2) and the villages (*ban* บ้าน), were ruled by nobles appointed not by the king, but by the governor. The king depended on the cooperation of the governors when he needed labourers for public works (such as irrigation project, road construction, building storehouses for provisions, etc.) or in the case of war.¹⁹⁸ In 1296, when the old Mon ruler Yiba and Boek invaded Chiang Mai, the invaders were defeated by troops raised from Chiang Rai region, which were commanded by Cai Songkham, a son of Mangrai and the governor of Chiang Rai.¹⁹⁹

- c) In the vassal *müang* the power of the king was even less felt.²⁰⁰ These *müang* were ruled by local families, which were connected with Chiang Mai by kinship. A few of the respectable ruling houses — such as those from Chiang Tung and Müang Nai — traced their ancestry even back to King Mangrai. The vassal *müang* delivered tribute in natural kinds (mostly in valuable forest products)²⁰¹ once every three years to the capital, and their rulers were required to come to Chiang Mai annually in order to “drink the water of allegiance” (*kin nam satca* กินน้ำสัจจา) in the presence of the king.²⁰²

In the reign of King Tilok (1441–1487), Chiang Mai exercised her power as overlord over the following vassal states (from the west to the north and to the east)²⁰³:

- a. Müang Nai²⁰⁴ and some other Shan principalities,²⁰⁵ whose principal population was Shan;

¹⁹⁷ SARASWADEE 1988: 2–3.

¹⁹⁸ SARASWADEE 1988: 7–8.

¹⁹⁹ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 48; CMC-TPCM 1971: 29, CMC-TSHR, SRI 1981b: 103; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 70–72.

²⁰⁰ The expression *müang khün* (เมืองขุ่น), “dependent *müang*”, which is also employed in Lan Na, fits the status of a autonomy vassal states less precisely as the term *prathetsarat* (ประเทศราช) used in Siam.

²⁰¹ The most important forest products were honey (*nam phüing* น้ำผึ้ง), bee wax (*khi phüing* ขี้ผึ้ง), incense (*kamyan* กำยาน), mushrooms (*het* เห็ด), ivory (*nga chang* งาช้าง), and rhinoceros (*nò raet* นอแรด). See USANEE 1988: 27–29.

²⁰² *Kham sòn phraya mangrai* 1976: 4.

²⁰³ See SARASWADEE 1988: 3. Large numbers of Lua populations lived in nearly all of the mentioned vassal states — as in core land of Lan Na as well. A considerable part of the Lua inhabited at that time — different from the today’s descendants — together with the Tai in the river valleys. On the role of the Lua during the Mangrai Dynasty, see RATANAPORN and RENARD 1988.

²⁰⁴ Müang Nai, which was the most important *müang* on the western frontier of Lan Na, was founded in 1318 by Khun Khüa, a son of Mangrai. Its population consisted predominantly of “Ngiao”, as the Yuan call the Shan with a negative connotation.

²⁰⁵ The CMC gives a list of a total of eleven Shan principalities (*müang ngiao* เมืองเงี้ยว), which after 1462/63 were submitted to King Tilok. Apart from Müang/Moeng Nai (ม. นาย) were the following *müang*: M. Su (ม. สู้), M. Lai Kha (ม. ลายข้า), M. Cit (ม. จิต), M. Cang (ม. จาง), M. King (ม. กิง), M. Lòk Còk (ม. ลอกจอก), M. Cam Ka (ม. จำคา), M. Yòng Huai (ม. ยองห้วย), M. Nòng Bòn (ม.

- b. Chiang Tung, whose principal population was Khün;
- c. Müang Yòng, whose principal population was Lü;
- d. Sipsòng Panna (the southern part)²⁰⁶, whose principal population was Yuan or “Kao”.²⁰⁷

The model composed of three different categories of *müang* resembled the structure of state formation in Sukhothai²⁰⁸ that has been investigated by Nakhòn Phannarong. It differs however, not insignificantly from the more complex system of Ayutthaya.²⁰⁹ The affiliation of any Northern Thai *müang* to one of the three above-mentioned categories was not at all static and rigid, as the scheme would suggest. While the core region exhibited a remarkable stability, the borders between the outer zones and the vassal states was more fluid. The principalities of Phrae and Nan, though they had been former vassal states of Sukhothai²¹⁰ and were at first also ruled by members of the local family during the first decade after it had been subjugated by Chiang Mai,²¹¹ retained a high degree of autonomy. After 1460 nevertheless nobles from other parts of Lan Na were appointed rulers (*cao müang*) of Phrae and Nan, by means of which

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- หนองบอน) and M. Si Pò (ม. สีป้อ). See CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 97; CMC-TPCM 1971: 64; see also CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 135; cf. PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 340.
- ²⁰⁶ Tilok conquered Müang Tun und Müang Luang [Lòng?] in 1455/56. In the year 1460/61 the king added for his conquest Müang Phong, likewise located in the extreme south of Sipsòng Panna. See CMC-TPCM 1971: 54; CCM-HP, WYATT und ARONRUT 1995: 83. Cf. PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 330–33.
- ²⁰⁷ “Kao” (การ) was obviously the original ethnic name which the Tai population in the valley of the Nan called themselves. This ethnonym was used in the chronicles from Nan only during the time in the 15th century before losing her sovereignty. See WYATT (in NC-PMN-W) 1994: 54, fn. 3. The Ram Khamhaeng inscription mentions the “Kao”, in fact together with the Lao, as a kingdom of the Tai race submitted to Sukhothai. See GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1992: 263 and 278.
- ²⁰⁸ Located beyond the capital of Sukhothai (*müang luang* or *müang ratchathani*) were the four *müang* ruled by the close relatives of the ruling house that marked the core region of the kingdom, the so-called “*müang* of the king’s children” (*müang luk luang*): Si Satchanalai, Sòng Khwae, Sa Luang and Nakhòn Chum. Less important, but also subordinate to the control of the ruler, were the “*müang* of the governor of the capital (*müang phraya maha nakhòn*). Those having to pay tribute were the vassals (*müang òk* or *müang khün*), for a time Phrae and Nan were among them. See NAKHÒN 1985: 68–69.
- ²⁰⁹ The main characteristic of the system of provincial administration that was established under King Bòrommatrailokanat in the second half of the 15th century, was the division of the provinces into four classes: *ek*, *tho*, *tri*, and *cattawa*. Moreover, the basic rule was valid: The higher the class of a province the less its spatial distance was from and the more it was dependent on the capital Ayutthaya. Only the province of the fourth grade, the *huamüang cattawa* was under the direct control of the king; they formed a “circle around the royal capital” (*wong ratchathani*). Beyond the actual domain were dependent “*müang* (*müang prathetsarat*) ruled by the king”. See TAMBIAH 1976: 133–35.
- ²¹⁰ The communication routes between Phrae or Nan and Sukhothai were considerably shorter than the corresponding routes between these two *müang* and Chiang Mai. Phrae und Nan could be reached from Sukhothai rather easily via the waterways, namely along the Yom river or rather the Nan river, whereas from Chiang Mai one had to cross in each case several mountain ranges. The close political and kinship relations between Nan and Sukhothai are substantiated by GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1969.
- ²¹¹ Phaña Intakaen, the old ruler of Nan, fled to Chaliang lying in the sphere of influence of Ayutthaya. His brother or nephew became then the new ruler, who recognised the sovereignty of Tilok and ruled Nan until his death in the year 1459. See NC-PMN-W, WYATT 1994: 53; CMC-TPCM 1971: 53, PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 325–27. Cf. GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1976: 133.

both principalities were administratively attached closer to Chiang Mai.²¹² An opposite development took place in Müang Nai and Chiang Tung in the west. Both principalities were ruled by sons of King Mangrai at the beginning of the 14th century and maintained close relations with Chiang Mai. However, not long after Mangrai's death they were allowed to acquire a stronger degree of independence. Under Tilok and Müang Kaeo their status as vassal states was explicitly recognised.²¹³

Located on the northern periphery is Sipsòng Panna, whose ruling house in Chiang Rung maintained close family ties with the Mangrai Dynasty in Lan Na. On broad ethnic and cultural levels there was also a strong alliance of the Lü with the Yuan. But on the political level, Chiang Rung constantly attempted to avoid having tribute relations with Chiang Mai. The proximity of Sipsòng Panna to China and to Burma, two powerful countries when compared to Lan Na, made it more difficult for Chiang Mai to enforce a lasting claim of her suzerainty over Chiang Rung. Only under the rule of the two energetic and charismatic kings, Mangrai and Tilok, did Chiang Rung send tribute delegations to Chiang Mai.²¹⁴

Due to its closer proximity to the northern outposts of Lan Na (Chiang Saen and Chiang Tung), the Lü from Müang Yòng were more reliable vassals. Around the year 1450 Müang Yòng was subdued by Tilok. “The king took his armies to fight the Lü of Ban Pung and Müang Yòng, and defeated them.”²¹⁵ Three decades later

²¹² The “Chronicle of Nan” reports that after the decease of Pha Saeng, the then Governor of Chiang Khòng, Mün Sòi, was nominated the Governor of Nan in 1460, but four years later he was transferred to Fang. See NC-PMN-W, WYATT 1994: 55. According to some versions of the “Chronicle of Chiang Mai”, however, King Tilok rewarded Yuthithira (Yudhiṣṭhira), the ex-Governor of Phitsanulok (Müang Sòng Khwae) who deserted to the side of Lan Na in 1451, for the rule over Ngao, “the Kao in the whole region of Phrae” [เมืองจางกาเมืองแพร่ทั้งแคว้น] (Kao is the appellation of the Tai groups of that time in Nan and Phrae, V.G.), after he had already previously been the Governor of Phayao. See CMC-TPCM 1971: 57; cf. PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 333. But other versions of CMC confirm that Cao Phaña Sòng Khwae (Yuthithira) was given the transfer of the administration of Ngao and Phrae. Nevertheless they do not mention Nan in this context. See CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 41; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 121. The “Chronicle of Nan” also does not confirm Cao Phaña Sòng Khwae's rule over Nan.

²¹³ The rulers of Müang Nai and Chiang Thòng, accompanied by a large entourage, appeared in Chiang Mai in early 1517. They drank the “water of allegiance” on May 27 and took the oath of allegiance to King Müang Kaeo. The ruler of Chiang Mai wished both of his vassals all the best luck and prosperity. The English translation of JKM talk about “the two provincial rulers” (JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 164), whereas the Siamese translation of this passage renders the text as “*cao prathetsarat thang sòng*” (JKM, SAENG 1958: 132). *Phrathetsarat* (ประเทศราช), literally “King of [another, but dependent] country”, is borrowed from Siamese not from Northern Thai terminology.

²¹⁴ Mangrai was the son of the beloved daughter of Thao Rung Kaen Chai (Tao Hung Kaen Cai, r. 1234–1257), the fourth ruler of the Lü federation later known under the name of Sipsòng Panna.

²¹⁵ Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 81; see also CMC-TPCM 1971: 53; see also CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 112. PY (PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 318), recorded the subjugation of Müang Yòng already at the beginning of the 15th century. As reported King Sam Fang Kaen conquered Müang Yòng, which was completely devastated by the Chinese, after the invasion of the Hò (1404/05) had retreated, and rebuilt it into a holy relic, the Maha Kesathat Cao Còm Yòng, which was sponsored by him. The “Chronicle of Müang Yòng” mentions the worship of the relic as the ritual centre of the *müang* and establishes a vague chronological context on the fighting between Lan Na and the Chinese Hò. However, no year is mentioned that can provide a more exact chronological order of events. See MS, SRI 79.027.05.064–064: *Tamnan müang yòng*, ff° 41–43, 50–54. However, the “Chronicle of Chiang Mai” does not report the conquest of the region around Müang Yòng in relation to the fighting against the invasion of the Hò in 1404/05. See

(1483/84) Müang Yòng fell temporarily into the hands of Lua (Lawa) rebels. Tilok sent an army to the region of unrest and defeated the poorly organised rebels, who fled to Chiang Rung.²¹⁶ From then until the Burmese invasion in 1557/58, Müang Yòng remained a vassal state of Chiang Mai.

The vassal states rendered not only important contributions to frontier security but also promoted the economy and trade of Lan Na. Rare and precious forest products such as honey, wax, incense, mushrooms, ivory, and rhinoceros horns were very coveted tribute articles in Chiang Mai. Precious metals, in particular silver, copper, and iron ores were produced in the Shan region and in Chiang Tung. The raw materials from Chiang Mai or from adjacent places like Hòt would be exported to Ayutthaya and Lower Burma, whereby Lan Na obtained the exchanged materials and other utensils. As the plain of the Ping river was one of the two main areas of rice cultivation in Lan Na, Chiang Mai exported above all rice to regions with chronic shortages of food, notably on the western and northern peripheries. As already mentioned, an important centre of regional inland trades was Chiang Saen. The huge rice market in Chiang Saen supplied rice to Nan, Chiang Tung, and even to Chiang Rung and Luang Prabang.²¹⁷

Although the loyalty of the vassals remained uncertain and fragile, in the course of the 15th century there was a general tendency towards centralisation. The king strengthened his control over the outer zones and his influence on the vassals by various means: a) dynastic alliances with the most important vassals; b) rotation of governors in the outer *müang* (mostly after the enthronement of a new king);²¹⁸ c) the exclusive right to make monastic donations.²¹⁹

In particular the importance of the last mentioned means should not be underestimated. The governors were permitted to donate land (*uthit* อุทิศ)²²⁰ and freemen (*phrai*) or their own slaves (*kha* or *khòi*) to monasteries before the rule of

CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 73–74; CMC-TPCM 1971: 47–48; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 24–25.

²¹⁶ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 101; CMC-TPCM 1971: 68; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 142.

²¹⁷ The trade relations between Lan Na and her vassals as well as between Lan Na and Ayutthaya are described in detail in USANEE 1988: 25–35.

²¹⁸ SARASWADEE (1988: 10–11) gives several examples for such rotations. In the case of, in particular, severe treason, the king would liquidate a governor. Tilok had the Governor of Müang Sòng executed because he delivered rice to the Siamese enemy. In less serious cases the king was satisfied by transferring the disloyal governor to a less important *müang*. In the year 1409/19 Sam Fang Kaen sent his son Tilok, until then was the Governor of Phrao, after a dispute, to the far remote Müang Yuam Tai. With this disciplinary transfer Tilok was in fact temporarily isolated from political events in the capital; yet in the years 1441/42 Tilok by collaborating with Sam Dek Nòi, a high official of his father, succeeded in overthrowing King Sam Fang Kaen from Müang Yuam Tai. See CMC-TPCM 1971: 48–49; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 102–104.

Through rotating the posts the establishment of a dynasty in the important *müang* of Lan Na proper could also be prevented. Local influential governors would aim at patronising close family members as their successors. Thus in Phayao Governor Yuthithira (Cao Sòng Khwae) was succeeded by his widow, who like her husband obviously had the complete King Tilok' trust. After her death (1490/91) King Nòt Chiang Rai appointed his stepfather Cao Si Mùn the new Governor of Phayao and thus ended the regional influence of the Yuthithira family. For this see the epigraphic evidence in *Prachum carük müang phayao* 1995: 24–26.

²¹⁹ See RAWIWAN 1988: 18–20; cf. SARASWADEE 1988: 12.

²²⁰ Inscriptions and chronicles from Lan Na do not use the term *kanlapana* (กัลปนา), which Ayutthaya had borrowed from the Khmer. See RAWIWAN 1982: 46.

Müang Kaeo.²²¹ Ambitious governors used this power to accumulate religious merits and concurrently to increase their political reputation.²²² Under Müang Kaeo, however, they had first to beg the king for permission.²²³ Religious donations were done exclusively in the names of kings. The water-ceremony which is originated from Sṛī Laikā must be performed so that the newly established monastery serves the agrarian prosperity of the kingdom.²²⁴

Moreover, the king could donate monasteries as well as sponsor the *phrai* (in the core region of Chiang Mai and Lamphun) that were directly under his direct control, or the *phrai* which were placed under the administration of a governor. Consequently the king secured an effective means to increase his religious prestige as well as his political influence beyond the region close to the capital. Through this means he profited from his monopoly of religious foundations that he de facto had — and King Müang Kaeo had made full use of this. The king succeeded in consolidating his role as *thammikarat*, protector of Buddhism, and at the same time in weakening potential rivals because the loss of workforce to the monasteries meant for the regional rulers sometimes a serious decrease in their demographic basis. The king imposed a network of loyal religious institutions on a system of potential centrifugal forces.²²⁵

The foundations of monasteries could not transgress certain objective limits. Workers whose duty was to maintain the monasteries, the so-called “servants of the monasteries” or *kha wat* (ข้าวัด), were exempted from corvée. Neither the king nor the governors were allowed to mobilise these “external inhabitants of the monasteries” for exceptional cases or in time of war. For this reason the numerical strength of the *kha wat* probably remained small in comparison to that of the *phrai müang*.²²⁶

²²¹ For this there are numerous evidences from Northern Thai inscriptions. Wat Nong Khwang was established in the year 1466 by the Governor of [Müang?] Òi. Two years later the Governor of Müang Wang Nüa built the monastery (Wat) Canthara-aram and donated 20 servants to this monastery (*kha wat*) and 300 *rai* (50 ha) of rice land. Likewise under the reign of King Tilok the Governor of Lampang donated four families to (Wat) Phrathat Luang. See RAWIWAN 1982: 121. Several isolated monastic endowments by non-royalty are reported still for the reign of King Müang Kaeo. For example, on 21 January 1516, several laypersons paid the amount of 400 *ngoen* (units of silver) to redeem two families who obviously had been in debt slavery. The two families were handed over as *kha wat* to the monastery Wat Sipsong Hông. See Inscription “Phayao 13”, *Prachum carük müang phayao* 1995: 300.

²²² Yuthitthira, the Governor of Phayao, whose sphere of influence extended to Phrae and Nan, had for himself the title “Phañña Asokalat, the ruler” (พระราชชาอโศกราชผู้เปนเจ้า) engraved in the inscription “Phayao 45” (page 2, line 4). Obviously Yuthitthira and his supporters viewed Phayao and the adjoining regions as a domain de facto independent from Chiang Mai. See *Prachum carük müang phayao* 1995: 93–98.

²²³ RAWIWAN 1982: 122.

²²⁴ This ceremony is called *lò nam su nüa thok tok phaendin* (tr. หล่อน้ำสู่เหนือทกตกแผ่นดิน), “moisten the land with water” [Skt.: *udaka*, “water”]. See RAWIWAN 1982: 122.

²²⁵ For the first time documentary evidences of extensive donations to Buddhist monasteries for the Indian Shatavahana-Kings of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. are found. As Kulke remarks, “the Shatavahana Kings were for the first time allowed to donate larger amount of land to Brahmans and Buddhist monasteries, provided them with immunities (*parihāra*), such as protection against the trespassing of royal officials and soldiers. [...] In order to remove the influences of Brahmans and Buddhist monasteries on local ruling powers they were provided with rich landed properties and immunities. Quoted from KULKE and ROTHERMUND 1982: 112.

²²⁶ This hypothesis is expressed and by SARASWADEE 1988: 13.

The spread of two Buddhist reform orders under the kings Kü Na and Tilok favoured the formation of a common identity among the ruling elite of Lan Na. Since the middle of 15th century, the kings were no longer establishing their power base by relying only on a far-reaching network of family relations but also on their spiritual and moral leading roles as *cakravartin* and *dharmarāja*. Under Tilok, the worshipping of relics as a cult and of consecrated Buddhist statues as the “State Palladium” had achieved a previously unknown extent. Eminent Buddhist statues such as the Phra Kaeo (“Jade Buddha” in Chiang Rai) or the Phra Kaeo Can Daeng (“Red Sandalwood Buddha” in Phayao) were taken from their original monasteries and paraded in the whole land of the capital. With imposing ceremonial processions, they were worshipped by Tilok in important monasteries patronised by the king, such as the Wat Pa Daeng Luang.²²⁷

But Tilokarat also created an integrated cult of relic worship in order to put himself in a superior position, like that of the Buddha whose relics were enshrined. He sought to express his political power through this integrated belief system comprising the indigenous cult and Buddhism, and so his power was affirmed and legitimised. Through the practice of land and labour endowments, the king and the Sangha became interdependent, which helped to secure his throne.²²⁸

During the reigns prior to Tilok, the kings appointed their sons and close relatives to be governors of *müang* in the outer zone, whereas during the reign of Tilok aristocrats not of kingly descent were increasingly recruited for attending to governmental affairs.²²⁹ By this means, he enlarged and unified the leading administrative class that viewed Chiang Mai as the undisputed political, ritual and cosmic centre of the country. The radical administrative reforms of his Siamese opponent, King Trailok of Ayutthaya, must have been inspired by Tilok’s reform works.

In the economic sector, likewise, Lan Na achieved a high level of centralisation. At the beginning of his reign, the young Tilok felt that he was forced to compile with the “Four requests” of his uncle MÜN Lok Sam Lan (also: MÜN Lok Nakhòn) who had helped him to come to power. The four requests appeared to be the king not only should give the governor the right to levy taxes and levy in his domain, but also cede to him the right to use them at his own disposal.²³⁰ Four decades later, at the end of his rule, Tilok had obviously rescinded the concession that was extracted against his will. In the years 1480–81 “the king Tilok entrusted MÜN Dam Phrakhot to raise from the population of Chiang Mai and the rest of the land gold, silver, cowry shells and taxes in natural kinds in huge amount so as the fill the public treasury.”²³¹

One reform of Tilok turned out to be disastrous after his death: the institution of Privy Council for electing kings. Since the reign of Nòt Chiang Rai the kings of Lan Na had been elected by the Council of the Regent, which was belonged to the

²²⁷ See JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 128, 158; cf. PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 342, 347.

²²⁸ DHIDA 1982: 105–106. The interdependence between king and *saṅgha* had already existed since the reign of Kü Na, pointed out to me by Prof. H. Hundius. Under Kü Na monks besides the representatives of the aristocrats were nominated royal judges in civil and criminal proceedings. See AROONRUT 1977: 42.

²²⁹ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 76; CMC-TPCM 1971: 51, CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 29–30; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 107–109.

²³⁰ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 75; CMC-TPCM 1971: 49–50; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 105.

²³¹ Quoted from CMC-TPCM 1971: 67.

influential aristocrats (*sena-amat* เสนามาตย์) from all quarters of the land and the *saṅgha* as the spiritual representative. Tilok could have been following the intention that the election of a new sovereign should gain a broader consent within the ruling elite. This wish reflected objective changes in state and society. Lan Na had increased in territory and population. Between 1300 and 1500, notably during the second half of the 15th century, in large parts of Lan Na there was an increase in land under agricultural cultivation and human settlements expanded. The land then had a larger amount of population to feed, a population that had probably become ethnically more homogeneous. Tilok tackled the problem of how the polity, which Mangrai had still managed by a family business, was to be transformed into a more stable institutional structure. The participation of broader aristocratic circles in the political decision-making process would reduce the power struggle within the small circle of ruling house. So probably Tilok had thought of considering his own experiences, notably the disputes of his father with Sam Fang Kaen, the predecessor of his father.

Tilok's considerations appear to be based on the premise that only a strong and charismatic personality was to be elected to steer the helm of the state. This precondition affected Tilok personally as well as his grandson Müang Kaeo, who had several buildings for central administration be established around 1520,²³² from which we may conclude that at least some basic structure of a central administration did exist. However, when weak kings were on the throne, the aristocrats could participate in “national” politics through the increasing influence on the Privy Council. Factions of aristocrats could be formed along the lines of regional divisions. This threatened the long-term coherence and, finally, the very existence of Lan Na. The established historical and geographic dichotomies between Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen remained a lurking potential danger.

6. Land and Population

Lan Na was a hierarchical society. Below the king and royal family (*ratchawong* ราชวงศ์) were the aristocrats (*nai* นาย); comprising the high-ranking and the low-ranking officials in the capital and in the various *müang* (here: provinces) of the kingdom. The mass of the population consisted of commoners (*phrai* ไพร่; NT: /phâj/), which were also known in the Northern Thai legal (i.e. customary law) texts as “commoners/freemen of the country” (*phrai müang* ไพร่เมือง).²³³ Males between 18 and 60 years old (*chakan* ฉกรรจ์; NT: /sakǎn/) could be recruited into corvée and military service.²³⁴ There were also serfs in Lan Na, but the number of them was smaller than that of Siam. Within the Northern Thai society the slaves (*kha* ข้า)²³⁵

²³² CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 106–107; CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 149. The term *kwan* (ก่วน) from Notton's point of view is the Yuan pendant of the Chinese *Khuàn*, “fonctionnaire, magistrat, autorité, mot tombé en désuétude, ne s'applique plus qu'à désigner un cornac”. For the year 1521 CMC-N reports the “construction du Hó Kong [tour-tambours] sur la place royale et du K'ao Sanám (bureau central administratif) à l'emplacement du Hó Yôt Nak'on.”

²³³ In the traditional Tai Dam society the *phrai* made up of about two thirds of the total population. See CONDOMINAS 1980: 289. Probably the component of other Tai people like the Yuan was not different.

²³⁴ A detailed analysis of the social status of the *phrai* is provided by AROONRUT 1977: 185–87.

²³⁵ In Siam *that* ทาส which is derived from the Sanskrit word *dāsa*, is normal.

were not at all outcasts; they were allowed to marry commoners, and under certain conditions were even allowed to inherit properties which could be further inherited by their offspring.²³⁶

Most of the *kha* were debt-slaves or former *phrai* (freemen) who entered slavery voluntarily so as to be exempted from corvée and military service.²³⁷ For both the poor and those with means, it appeared that slavery was an attractive alternative — as least as a temporary refugium —, for the *kha* as a rule could buy themselves free from slavery. The king and aristocrats had vital interests to protect the social class of the *phrai*, which formed the foundation of the state. In trying to improve the economic situation of the *phrai*, there was for instance a legal regulation that exempted newly-cleared land from taxes for the first three years of cultivation.²³⁸

6.1 The *Nai Sip* System

Until the 19th century Lan Na lacked a system comparable to that of the Siamese *sakdina* system.²³⁹ In Ayutthaya the basic personal dependence of the free communities was neither subordinate to the king (as *phrai luang* ไพร่หลวง) nor to a high ranking aristocrat (as *phrai som* ไพร่สม).²⁴⁰ However, in Lan Na the aristocrats, in legal text mostly known as *latcatakun* (Siamese: *ratchatrakun* (ราชตระกูล), did not have *phrai* under their direct control. Aroonrut points at the fact that in contrast to Ayutthaya the Yuan aristocrats of Lan Na had less power and were not part of a refined *sakadina* system.²⁴¹

The *phrai* in Chiang Mai and in other parts of Lan Na were organised along territorial units based on the system of *nai sip* (“master of ten”). The system which was sometimes also called *hua sip* (“head of ten”), is described in *mangraisat* as the basic principle of organising labour force:

For every ten citizens, let there be one Nay Sip (*nai sip*), and one Foreman to act as intermediary and make known the tasks assigned. For each five Nay Sip, let there be one Nay Ha-sip (*nai ha sip*), [and two Foremen], one for the left side and one for the right side. For two Nay Ha-sip, let there be one Nay Roy (*nai ròi*). For ten Nay Roy, let there be one Cau Ban (*cao phan*). For ten Cau Ban, let there be ten Cau Hmin (*cao mün*). For ten Cau Hmin, let there be one Cau Sen (*cao saen*). Let the country be administered in this way so as not to inconvenience the King.²⁴²

A very similar system of the control of manpower, though employing a different terminology, is reported for the Shan federation of Moeng (Müang) Mao. While in all larger and more prominent *müang* the local rulers or governors (*cao moeng*) had

²³⁶ AROONRUT 1977: 113.

²³⁷ See Article 12 of *mangraisat* (Wat Sao Hai version), GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1977a: 152.

²³⁸ See Article 12 of *mangraisat* (Wat Sao Hai version), IBID; also cf. AROONRUT 1977a: 211–12.

²³⁹ AROONRUT 1977: 113.

²⁴⁰ For a clear and comprehensive description of the Siamese *sakdina* system it is to refer to the work by AKIN 1969 (in particular pp. 9–99).

²⁴¹ AROONRUT 1977: 114.

²⁴² Quoted from GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1977a: 147–48. I have inserted in brackets my own spelling system of Tai terms. It deviates from the Sanskrit orientated transcription used by Griswold and Prasert, and is closer to the phonetic system. The translation of *nai ròi* into “master of the (sic!) hundred”, etc. by Griswold and Prasert is changed into, for stylistic reason, “master of a hundred, etc.; cf. *Mangraisat* (Version Wat Mün Ngoen Kòng) 1975: 2.

control of the whole civilian and military apparatus, the so-called *cao lu* (เจ้าลู), directly attached to the *cao hu*, commanded more than 10,000 men. At the lower levels the *cao kang* (เจ้ากั้ง), the *cao pak* (เจ้าปาก) 100, the *cao hasip* (เจ้าห่าสิบ) and the *cao cun* (เจ้าจุน) had 1,000, 100, 50 and 10 men under their respective command.²⁴³

The origins of the *nai sip* system are not explained clearly, in particular the *mangraisat* surely does not reflect the legal condition, which was valid during the time when King Mangrai was living, but shows a legal condition that was much later. However, Wang Ji Min argues that “the *nai sip* system from Müang Nai was introduced following that of Müang Babai-xifu [Lan Na]”.²⁴⁴ He supports his view with the following argument: Khun Khüa, Mangrai’s youngest son, was exiled to Müang Nai (c. 1310) after he had a dispute with his elder brother, Cai Songkham. In Müang Nai, an erstwhile vassal of Chiang Rung, had already an administrative system, which followed the *nai sip* principle; because there was a *khom kwan* (ข่มกวาน), which on behalf of the local ruler “announced to all the *nai sip* the assignments that had to be performed permanently.”²⁴⁵ Wang Ji Min suggests further that the Tai Lü in Sipsong Panna had taken over this system from the Chinese during the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127).

[At that time] there was a system in the countryside, under which, for ten families there was a “small supervisor” and for fifty families a “medium supervisor”. For one hundred families there was a “big supervisor”, apart from that an assistant of the “big supervisor”. The system was employed at that time as a precaution taken for security so that in the night no robbery and damage of property took place in the villages. If one [member of] a family was involved in stealing, the ten families [of the group] would be punished. In time of war the high officials sent an order for recruiting soldiers and labourers with this system — from top to bottom — easily and quickly.²⁴⁶

The above description is the so-called *bao-jia* system introduced during the Song period, which was a system of organising the population similar to that of the *li-jia* system of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). One *li* composed of 110 families with a *li* headman; one *jia* consists of 10 families with a *jia* headman. It was a rural organisation for census registration, tax-raising, and labour service.²⁴⁷

Aroonrut Wichienkeo follows essentially the argument developed by Wang Ji Min.²⁴⁸ Jacques Lemonie traces the establishment of *Nai sip* system in Sipsong Panna directly to Mongolian influences. After the conquest of Dali, the capital of the kingdom of Later Dali (1096–1253) — the successor state of Nan Chao —²⁴⁹ in the

²⁴³ SOMPHONG 2001: 155–56.

²⁴⁴ WANG Ji Min 1988: 65.

²⁴⁵ Here WANG Ji Min (1988: 65) quotes from PRASERT na Nagara’s introduction to *mangraisat* (1978: 1). The CMC and other sources indeed mention the exile of Khun Khüa to Müang Nai, but not *nai sip* or *Hua sip* system in Müang Nai. See also Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 53; CMC-TPCM 1971: 34 and CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 73; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 278.

²⁴⁶ WANG Ji Min 1988: 66.

²⁴⁷ See LIEW 1985.

²⁴⁸ AROONRUT 1989: 8.

²⁴⁹ It was in fact the Later Dali kingdom (1096–1253) which was conquered by the Mongols in 1253, not the Nan Chao kingdom of the House of Meng. Dali was ruled by the House of Duan. Nan

year 1253, the Lü in Sipsòng Panna also came under Mongol rule. In 1292 Phaña Moeng Nai, who was the ruler of Chiang Rung recognised by the Mongols, established the so-called Ho [*hua*] *sip* system to consolidate the control over the population.²⁵⁰

The *Ho sip* system was a military organisation following the pattern of the Mongolian Army.²⁵¹ The [*baojia*] system under which families were organised into units of ten that had developed gradually during the Northern Song period, then permitted the ruler of the Yuan (1206–1368) to introduce it to entire China and improve it further.²⁵² As for his thesis, the “feudal” order of society of the Mongols and (later) the Chinese had exerted an impressive influence on the Lü in Sipsòng Panna; Lemonie quotes an evidence: The Lü word “master”, *nai* (นาร), which was also used in Lan Na and Siam, derived presumably from the Mongolian word *noyan*. The Lü word for “ten thousand” (*mün*) and that in Mongolian (*tünaen*) are similar.²⁵³

Amphai Doré shows that in Laos, at latest under King Fa Ngum (r. 1353–1373), founder of the Lan Sang kingdom, titles like *saen*, *mün* and *phan*, borrowed from the *Nai sip* system, had lost their original military meaning. By around 1286, in Luang Prabang the title *mün* had already distinguished officials with political administrative functions.²⁵⁴ Though Doré considers that the introduction of the *Nai sip* system in Lan Sang before the mid-13th century unlikely, he leaves the possibility open, that it was implemented in Nan Chao (to be more exactly Dali) already prior to the conquest by the Mongolians (1253).²⁵⁵

The *nai sip* system was obviously moulded for military necessities. In times of war, it enabled a quick mobilisation of eligible men for military service and organised them into military units.²⁵⁶ The system could also function well in enlisting workers for civilian undertakings. The *nai sip* system endured over the centuries — at least rudimentarily — in Lan Na down to the 19th century. A legal text from Nan dated

Chao kingdom (contemporary of the Tang Dynasty) was much earlier than the two Dali kingdoms. During the later Song Dynasty and Yuan period there was no longer a Nan Chao kingdom.

²⁵⁰ LEMOINE 1987: 131. As to a possible Chinese origin of the system, Foon Ming Liew points out that *hua* means Chinese and *sip* (in a Chinese dialect, such as Hakka) ten or decimal. Thus *ho sip* or *hua sip* should be interpreted as a Chinese decimal system of civil or military organisation.

²⁵¹ For the Yuan military systems, see HSIAO 1978. As to the military organisation of the Mongols, MOTE (1999: 475) remarks: “[Chinggis Khan] also undertook the difficult process of reorganizing his army into decimal units of 10, 100, 1,000, and eventually 10,000 men, and of imposing on those units a chain of command that brought his military subordinates under strict discipline.”

²⁵² Obviously 100 families form the smallest unit. See DORÉ (1987: 196), who bases his description/account on the Chinese chronicle *Manshu* (Book of the Barbarians). According to WANG Ji Min there were three categories of the “unit of 1,000 families”: a) under 300 families; b) 300 to 700 families, and c) 700 to 1,000 families. An analogy was the differentiation of the “unit of 10,000 families” in similar three categories.

²⁵³ LEMOINE 1987: 131–32.

²⁵⁴ Doré bases his thesis on an excessively large number of population in the late 13th century. A total strength of 1,000,000 men capable of bearing arms, as was justified in the “census” of Sam Saen Thai a century later, surely only had symbolical value. Thus it is not convincing when DORÉ (1987: 664, fn. 1) draws the conclusion: “Si l’effectif total des troupes du Lan Sang est d’une million, on peut estimer que Mun [Mün = “10,000”] Krabong et Mun Can possèdent chacun entre 2 à 300,000 hommes.”

²⁵⁵ DORÉ 1987: 207, 664.

²⁵⁶ It is possible to think of military units such as a platoon (10 men), a company (50–100 men), a battalion (1,000 men) and a division of army (10,000 men). The Ming garrison called *weisuo* was organised like that. See Liew 1998, I, 69–71 and p. 364 (Table 11).

1861 mentions a regulation, according to which cows and buffaloes were to be fenced up and kept away from the rice fields. In implementing the regulation, the *hua sip* was entrusted to co-operate with his subordinate, the *luk sip*.²⁵⁷ The Lü in Sipsòng Panna (southwest China) and Chiang Khaeng (northwest Laos) have kept the institution of *hua sip* until the late 19th century. In both regions *hua sip* also designated a territorial unit above the village level. Up to ten villages or, better to say, hamlets formed one *hua sip*. But the number of hamlets in one *hua sip* could be less. We find evidence that just one single large village constituted one *hua sip*.²⁵⁸

6.2 The Panna System

Parallel to labour force organisation along a “decimal system”, there was a territorial unit existing in Lan Na that enabled the mobilisation of human potential, namely the *panna* (พันนา). Although *panna* means “Thousand Rice Fields”, the word shall not be translated literally into one thousand *rai* (= 167 ha), but similar to the term “Lan Na” it shall be interpreted as a territorial unit. *Panna* was the basic administrative unit of Lan Na, between the levels of *müang* and village (*ban*), and is sometimes rendered as “district” in western works. The existence of another administrative term that lies between the levels of *panna* and *ban*, the *pakna* (ปากนา), is not certain, as the evidence in the manuscripts and epigraphic materials is too vague.²⁵⁹ The recruitment of manpower for public projects or for military service²⁶⁰ was carried out on the *panna* level. Taxes and tributes were levied from the *panna* and from there they were delivered to the respective *müang*, whence the revenues were eventually channelled into Chiang Mai.²⁶¹ The *panna* served as a decisive connecting link between village and capital in the distribution processes of economic resources. The economic importance of *panna* for the king is reflected in the contemporary inscription. An inscription from Wat Kao Nöt (Phayao) dated 1412/13 records a donation of Sam Fang Kaen:

²⁵⁷ “Anacak lak kham (kotmai müang nan)”, SARASWADEE 1993: 79 [f° 23 the original manuscript].

²⁵⁸ This was the case with regards to the numerous *hua sip* belonging to Moeng Long (southwest of Chiang Rung). As to the institution of the *hua sip* in Sipsòng Panna cf. YANYONG und RATANAPORN 2001: 63–64.

²⁵⁹ The only reference in a manuscript to the term *pakna* that is known to me is found in the CMC. In a chronicle we find the statement that in the years 1286/87 Ngam Müang, the ruler of Phayao, was to cede to his ally Mangrai a “*pakna*, which had 500 houses”. Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 33; CMC-TPCM 1971: 13. In AROONRUT’s Northern Thai Dictionary the term *pakna* is registered and, referring to the above mentioned passage just quoted from the CMC, is rendered as “cluster of village under a single, administration, a sub-district.” However, in UDOM’s dictionary the corresponding entry is missing. The epigraphic evidence is even less conclusive. The inscription “Lamphun 22” from Wat Wisuttharam, the largest and most important monastery in Phayao, mentions three officials holding the title *pak*. Nevertheless, the inscription gives no visible connection with an administrative unit called *pak*. See *Prachum carük müang phayao* 1995: 265–69. According to AROONRUT (1996a: 415) *pak* is characterised as “a person supervising 100 persons”, later on *pak* was transformed into *pakna*, “a government official in charge of agriculture”.

²⁶⁰ After Mangrai had suppressed the revolt led by his son Cao Khun Kham (Cai Songkham), he recruited strong forces from the city of Chiang Rai (tr. เนื้อเขียงราย, “flesh, substance” + “Chiang Rai”) as well as from the *luk panna* (tr. ลูกพันนา, “offspring” + *panna*) subordinate to Chiang Rai. See CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 46–47; CMC-TPCM 1971: 29.

²⁶¹ AROONRUT 1989: 9–11; SARASWADEE 1996: 158–59; SONGSAENG 1986: 57.

The king gave field produce from *panna* Muang [พันทนาม่วง] with the value 55,000 *bia*.²⁶² Cao Si Mūn Phayao was very pleased over the meritorious deed of the king, who donated the Buddha 500 [units] of rice from the *panna* Chiang Di. The king as well as Mahathewi, his mother, procured these high merits, that would continue as long as, until the religion has reached 5,000 years.²⁶³

The existence of the *panna* system can for the first time, be verified with regards to the principality of Phayao. The author of the *Phayao Chronicle* (*Tamnan müang phayao*, National Library Version, PC-TMP-HSH), which was said to be compiled under the direct auspices of King (Khun) Còm Tham (around 1100),²⁶⁴ reports that the ruler used the territorial basic unit of *panna* to carry out the taking of censuses.

[...] The ruler allowed the households to be counted. Every five households were registered in a list; they formed 19 *dikan* and 1,000 *dikan* would be put together in a *panna*.²⁶⁵

One *panna* therefore was composed of over 263 households or about 1,315 inhabitants, supposing that the average household comprises five persons. In another version of the *Phayao Chronicle* (Wat Si Khom Kham Version, PC-TMP-WSKK), it gives a different description:

There was a royal edict to register the population of the whole region of Müang Phukam N̄ao (Phayao). All military and civil officials and all the scribes went out to compile the census lists of all places in the whole land. It was ordered to investigate the entire population of [Phayao]. There were 180,000 inhabitants. The counting including the outer regions (*huamüang nòk* หัวเมืองนอก) amounted to 1,323,000 inhabitants.

Thirty-six *panna* were organised. Five people shall live from a *na* (paddy field). Five *tang* (ตาง - 100–150 litre) or 50,000 (unit not stated, V. G.) of seed-rice are at the disposal of one person.²⁶⁶

The total number of *panna* in Phayao was 264, as to the 36 *panna* in the core area 228 *panna* in the outer zones have to be added.²⁶⁷ The obviously highly exaggerated

²⁶² The spelling *be* (เบ) used in the inscription indicates a possible Lü descent of the author.

²⁶³ Inscription “Lamphun 27”, *Prachum carük müang phayao* 1995: 76.

²⁶⁴ The dates of the term of office of Khun Còm Thams cannot be established exactly. PRACHAKIT-KORACAK (1973: Appendix, without giving the pages) gives the period between the year from 1096/97 to 1120/21; yet the number of years (quite plausible) given appears to be obtained from deducing the data of various manuscripts. None of the editions of chronicles from Phayao or those in manuscripts that I have consulted give explicitly the dates of enthronement or of death of King Còm Tham.

²⁶⁵ “Version Hò samut haengchat” (PC-TMP-HSH), from AROONRUT et al. 1984: 30 [in original manuscript f° 43].

²⁶⁶ PC-WSKK, Hundius Collection, f° 21. [tr. มีราชอาชญาให้อัดนับดูคนในท้องเขตแขวงเมือง พุกามยาว ลูกเมืองทั้งมวล ส่วนว่าเสนาอามาตทั้งหลายหนังสือเสมียนทั้งหลายตีโพจดหมายเอาเส้นคนชู้บ้านชู้เมืองชู้คน ชู้แห่งชู้ที่นั่น แล้วสั่งรวมคน ทั้งมวลมีคนแสน 8 หมื่น สั่งรวมทั้งหัวเมืองนอก มีคนล้าน 3 แสน 2 หมื่น 3 พันคน จึงตั้งไว้ 36 พันนา แล 5 คนโหนเปนนา 1 คิงคนโหนหื้อเยยะนา 5 ตาง คือว่า 5 หมื่นเข้าเชื้อแล]. Cf. PC-WSBR, quoted from AROONRUT 1989: 6 [f° 21 in original manuscript].

population figures²⁶⁸ could hardly be the result of the exact registration, but were probably based on the following consideration: Assuming that in a *panna* the average population was 5,000 inhabitants, that means the 264 *panna* in Phayao, including its 22 vassals or so-called “outer regions” (*huamüang nõk* หัวเมืองนอก)²⁶⁹, had a population of 1,320,000 people. This number is almost exactly in accordance with the census report of 1,323,000 inhabitants mentioned in the manuscript quoted above.

The two consulted versions of the *Phayao Chronicle* suggest different average numbers of persons living in one *panna*. The numbers of persons of a *panna* fluctuated therefore between 1,300 (PC-TMP-HSH) and 5,000 (PC-TMP-WSKK), and as a result it is difficult to decide which of the two numbers comes closer to reality.

The *Phayao Chronicle* gives the impression that a *panna* could compose of up to ten or more villages. One version of the chronicle (PC-TMP-HSH) mentions the names of fourteen villages of *panna* Chiang Di and twenty-eight villages of *panna* Ngüm. However, most of the others out of the total ten *panna* that are mentioned by name, comprised only six or seven villages. Hence, to derive the estimation for the total numbers of villages from the 102 *panna* (as given in PC-TMP-HSH) will be misleading. A careful study of the texts confirms that the suspicious figure “102” is not related to the *panna*, but the entire numbers of villages (106) in the total of only ten (actually available) *panna* of the principality of Phayao.²⁷⁰

Table 2: Panna and Villages in Phayao (c. 1100) [a]

<i>Panna</i> No.	Transcription (conventional)	Phonetic transcription	Siamese transcription	Number of villages
1.	Chiang Di	/ciaŋ ¹ dii ¹ /	เชียงดี	14
2.	Lin	/lin ¹ /	ลิน	6
3.	Kheng	/keŋ ¹ /	เคง	7
4.	Khok Luang	/khook ³ luaŋ ⁶ /	โครกหลวง	7
5.	Phüm	/pʰum ¹ /	พึม	16
6.	Chan	/can ¹ /	ฉัน	7
7.	Paeng	/pɛŋ ⁶ /	แปง	7
8.	Khom	/kom ¹ /	คม	7
9.	Wüm	/wʰum ¹ /	วึม	7
10.	Ngüm	/ŋum ¹ /	งึม	28
1.–10.	Total			109

Source: AROONRUT 1989: 16–17.

Phra Devavisuddhivedi, abbot of the monastery (Wat) Si Khom Kham, Phayao, arrived at a similar result. Phra Devavisuddhivedi analysed the names of the

²⁶⁷ PC-WSKK, Hundius Collection, f° 23. One version of the “Chronicle of Phayao”, on which “Phongsawadan Müang Ngoen Yang-Chiang Saen” is also based, gives only “altogether 124 *panna* [namely 36 *panna* in core region and 88 *panna* in the outer zones].

²⁶⁸ The population in the districts of today’s province of Phayao reached the mark of 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century.

²⁶⁹ Ngao in the south, Thoeng in the northeast and Wiang Pa Pao in the northwest also belong to the *huamüang nõk*. These three *müang* obviously formed the outer corner points under the sphere of influence that Phayao claimed.

²⁷⁰ PC-TMP-HSH, AROONRUT 1989: 16–17. A list of all the 22 *huamüang nõk* is found in PC-WSKK, Hundius Collection, f° 19.

villages in the 36 *panna*, as they are listed in the *Phayao Chronicle* (PC-WSKK), and, in addition, endeavoured to identify their locations as accurately as possible.

Table 3: *Panna* and Villages in Phayao (c. 1100) [b]

<i>Panna</i> No.	Transcription (conventional)	Phonetic transcription	Siamese transcription	Number of villages
1.	Chiang Di	/ciaŋ ¹ dii ¹ /	เชียงดี	14
2.	Khok Luang	/kook ³ luaŋ ⁶ /	โคกหลวง	6
3.	Chae Tak	/cɛɛ ³ taak ² /	แช่ตาก	Ø
4.	Muang	/muɑŋ ³ /	ม่วง	7
5.	Laeng	/lɛɛŋ ¹ /	แลง	Ø
6.	Thung Luang	/tuŋ ³ luaŋ ⁶ /	ทุ่งหลวง	Ø
7.	Chan	/can ¹ /	ชัน	7
8.	Lò Tai	/lɔɔ ¹ tai ⁴ /	ล่อไต	Ø
9.	Chiang Khian	/ciaŋ ¹ khian ³ /	เชียงเคียน	Ø
10.	Thon	/ton ¹ /	ทน	Ø
11.	Khrua	/khua ¹ /	ครัว	Ø
12.	San	/saan ⁶ /	สาน	Ø
13.	Chanak	/ca ⁴ naak ³ /	ชานาค	Ø
14.	Haen	/hɛɛn ⁶ /	แหน	Ø
15.	Chiang Khoeng	/ciaŋ ¹ khœŋ ³ /	เชียงเค็ง	(= No. 9)
16.	Loeng	/lœŋ ¹ /	เล็ง	Ø
17.	Lin	/lin ¹ /	ลิน	6
18.	Kaeo	/kɛɛw ⁴ /	แก้ว	Ø
19.	Chang Luang	/saɑŋ ⁶ luaŋ ⁶ /	ฉางหลวง	Ø
20.	Mun	/muun ¹ /	มูล	Ø
21.	Khwaè Nòi	/khwɛɛ ¹ nɔɔj ⁵ /	แควน้อย	Ø
22.	Tha Khrai	/taa ³ khai ⁵ /	ท่าไคร้	Ø
23.	Chae Hat	/cɛɛ ³ haat ² /	แช่หาด	Ø
24.	Paen (Paeng)	/pɛɛn ⁴ / (/pɛɛŋ ⁶ /)	แป้น (แปง)	7
25.	Kheng	/keɛŋ ¹ /	เคง	7
26.	Püm	/pɯm ⁶ /	ปืม	8
27.	Chai	/cai ¹ /	ชัย	Ø
28.	Kim	/kim ⁶ /	กิม	Ø
29.	Chao	/cao ¹ /	เซา	Ø
30.	Chuai	/cuaj ³ /	ชวย	Ø
31.	Chiang Chi	/ciaŋ ¹ cii ¹ /	เชียงชี	Ø
32.	Chang	/caɑŋ ⁵ /	ช้าง	Ø
33.	Chae Wo	/cɛɛ ³ woo ⁴ /	แช่หั่ว	?
34.	Chae Hom	/cɛɛ ³ hom ² /	แช่ห่ม	?
35.	Khom	/kom ¹ /	คม	6
36.	Ngüm	/ŋɯm ¹ /	งิม	35
1.-36.	Total			103

Source: DEVAVISUDDHIVEDI 1991: 84–87.

The result is by no means amazing: Only ten *panna* could be identified; the locations of two other *panna* could not be definitely ascertained; and twenty-four *panna* had no villages at all. Hence this latter group of *panna* were called *panna wang plao* (พื้ณาว่างเปล่า) or “empty *panna*”. The really existing *panna*, however, contained a total of 103 villages.²⁷¹ As far as they can be identified, most *panna* were situated within a circle with a diameter of 80 km centred at the Kwan Phayao lake. It is worth mentioning that more than two thirds of Phayao consisted of fictitious *panna*, whose only objective was probably to complete the total number of *panna* according to the formula $2^n (+1)$, which is considered in Southeast Asia as auspicious.²⁷²

A perusal of the Northern Thai Chronicles shows that only the most important *müang* in Lan Na possessed sub-units called *panna*, whose number was calculated according to the above-mentioned formula. Ngoen Yang had 32 *panna*;²⁷³ Chiang Rai²⁷⁴ and Chiang Saen,²⁷⁵ which was founded by king Saen Phu in 1328, also had the same number of *panna*.²⁷⁶ Later on, Chiang Saen expanded territorially and finally comprised 65 ($= 2^6 + 1$) *panna*.

²⁷¹ DEVAVISUDDHIVEDI 1991.

²⁷² As SHORTO (1963) and TAMBIAH (1991) emphasise, Indian cosmology is based on the basic number “4”. The territorial structures organised according to the principle of *maṇḍala* shall reflect the cosmos and represent cosmological harmony. Therefore they were organised by basing on the systems whose units have the numerical sizes of 5, 9, 17, 33, 65 (and so on). “The number 33 is only the last of a series, subsumable under the formula 2^n+1 , which recurs time and again in political contexts in South East Asia.” The Mon kingdom in Pegu (Ramaññadeśa) was divided into three provinces: Pegu, Martaban, and Bassein. Each of them comprised 33 *myo* (the Burmese counterpart of the Thai *müang*), which means 32 *myo* and the capital. Sometimes the capital, centre and personification of the entire, is not to be included. See SHORTO 1963: 581. In the early period of Bangkok Nakhòn Si Thammarat, as an elevated “province of the first class” (*müang ek*) had 36 administrative departments (*krom*), whereas Ratburi, a “province of the fourth class” (*müang cattawa*) only had 14 *krom*. See RUJAYA 1984: 48. Consequently the 36 *panna* of Phayao can also be understood as a variant model “ $2^n(+1)$ ”: $36 = 2^5 + 4$ [for the four cardinal points].

²⁷³ PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 225.

²⁷⁴ *Tamnan phün müang chiang rai*, from RAWIWAN 1988: 14.

²⁷⁵ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 59; CMC-TPCM 1971: 38.

²⁷⁶ PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 285–86.

Table 4: Panna in Chiang Rai (around 1300)

Nr.	Transcription (conventional)	Phonetic transcription	Siamese transcription
1.	Si Yòng Nam Hua Hin Wiang	/sii ⁶ ñɔŋ ¹ nam ⁵ hua ⁶ hin ⁶ wiang ¹ /	สี่ยงน้ำหัวหินเวียง
2.	Phu Lao	/puu ¹ law ¹ /	พูเลา
3.	Chiang Rai Nòi	/cian ¹ haaj ¹ nɔɔj ⁵ /	เชียงรายน้อย
4.	Phian	/phan ⁶ /	เฟียร
5.	Chiang Lai	/cian ¹ lai ¹ /	เชียงไล
6.	Tha Kong	/taa ³ kong ⁶ /	ท่ากง
7.	Wan	/wan ¹ /	วัน
8.	Chae Liang	/cee ³ liang ¹ /	แช่เลียง
9.	Chae Lat	/cee ³ laat ³ /	แช่ลาด
10.	Khwaen Òi	/khweɛn ³ ɔɔj ⁴ /	แคว้อ้อย
11.	Fai Kaeo Nam Hua	/faaj ⁶ keew ⁴ nam ⁵ hua ⁶ /	ฝายแก้วน้ำหัว
12.	Tian Lò Nòi	/tian ⁶ loɔ ¹ nɔɔj ⁵ /	เตียรลอน้อย
13.	Chai Khru ... Phian	/cai ¹ khuu ¹ ... phian ¹ /	ไชครุ... เกียร
14.	Chae Lan	/cee ³ laan ⁵ /	แช่ล่าน
15.	Chae Lung	/cee ³ lun ¹ /	แช่ลุง
16.	Sagna	/sa'ŋaa ⁵ /	ซง่า
17.	Chang Khòng	/caan ¹ kɔɔŋ ⁴ /	ช่างคอง
18.	Chiang Lom	/ciang ¹ lom ¹ /	เชียงลม
19.	Tin	/tiin ⁶ /	ติน
20.	Tò Na Mai Kiang Kham	/tɔɔ ⁶ naa ⁴ mai ⁵ kiang ⁶ kham ¹ /	ตอหน้าไม้เกียงคำ
21.	Tò Saeng	/tɔɔ ⁶ seɛŋ ¹ /	ตอแซง
22.	Tò Wai	/tɔɔ ⁶ waaj ⁶ /	ตอหวาย
23.	Khwaen Khong	/khwen ³ khong ¹ /	แคว้รคอง
24.	Nòi Kham	/nɔɔj ⁵ kham ¹ /	น้อยคำ
25.	Khwaen Nòi	/khwen ³ nɔɔj ⁵ /	แคว้รน้อย
26.	Hit	/hit ¹ /	หิด (?)
27.	Maha Khu pak Kok Lüang	/ma'haa ⁶ kuu ¹ paak ² kok ¹ luang ¹ /	มหาคุปากกเคือง (?)
28.	<i>pao</i> („uninhabited“)	/paw ² /	เปล้า
29.	Maem	/meɛm ¹ /	แมม (?)
30.	Khwaen Dong	/khwen ³ doŋ ¹ /	แคว้รดง
31.	Chiang Rung Nòi	/ciang ¹ hun ³ nɔɔj ⁵ /	เชียงรุ่งน้อย
32.	Chan	/can ¹ /	ชัน

Sources: MS, Hundius Mikrofilm Documentation, No. 660, Roll 17: “Tamnan müang ciang hai”, ff° 5/3–6/1; compare MS, Hundius Mikrofilm Documentation, No. 599, Roll 17: “Tamnan ciang saen ciang hai”, f° 23.

Table 5: *Panna* in Chiang Saen and the Adjacent Regions (c. 1330)

Transcription (conventional)	Phonetic transcription	Siamese Transcription	Number of	<i>panna/na</i>
Chiang Saen	/ciaŋ ¹ seen ⁶ /	เชียงใหม่	32	<i>panna</i>
including:				
“Central” territory (Kang Cao Müang)	/kaang ⁶ caw ⁴ mɯaŋ ¹ /	กลางเจ้าเมือง	9	<i>panna</i>
“Left-hand” territory (Khwaen Sai)	/khwen ³ saaj ⁵ /	แคว้นซ้าย	7	<i>panna</i>
“Right-hand” territory (Khwaen Khwa)	/khwen ³ khwaa ⁶ /	แคว้นขวา	8	<i>panna</i>
Border zones:				
Müang Phayak	/mɯaŋ ¹ pha'ñaak ³ /	ม. ภัยาก	2	<i>panna</i>
Müang Kai	/mɯaŋ ¹ kaaj ⁶ /	ม. กาย	2	<i>panna</i>
Müang Hai	/mɯaŋ ¹ hai ¹ /	ม. ไห	1.500	<i>na</i>
Müang Luang	/mɯaŋ ¹ luaŋ ⁶ /	ม. หลวง	1.500	<i>na</i>
Müang Pukha	/mɯaŋ ¹ puu ¹ khaa ¹ /	ม. พุกดา	1	<i>panna</i>
Müang Len Tai	/mɯaŋ ¹ leen ¹ tai ⁴ /	ม. เลนใต้	8	<i>panna</i>
Müang Len Nüa	/mɯaŋ ¹ leen ¹ nya ⁶ /	ม. เลนเหนือ	9	<i>panna</i>
Müang Palaeo*	/mɯaŋ ¹ pa'læw ¹ /	ม. แพลว	500	<i>na</i>
Adjacent territories:				
Fang	/faaŋ ⁶ /	ฝาง	3	<i>panna</i>
Müang Sat	/mɯaŋ ¹ saat ² /	ม. สาด	500	<i>na</i>
Müang Cuat	/mɯaŋ ¹ cwaat ³ /	ม. ชาวต	100	<i>na</i>
Müang Hang	/mɯaŋ ¹ haan ⁶ /	ม. หาง	100	<i>na</i>
Total			3.700	<i>na</i>

* The manuscript SRI 81.060.05.038–038: “Lamdap latcakun wongsa nai müang lan na”, f° 7. Müang Palaeo comprised 5 *panna* accordingly.

Sources: SRI 81.069.05.038–038: “Lamdap latcakun wongsa nai müang lan na”, f° 7; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 10; *Tamnan müang ciang saen*, SRISAKRA 1984: 247.

Was the *panna* in all cases an administrative unit that was placed below the *müang* level? Müang Luang and Müang Hai had 1,500 *na*, which amounted to 1,5 *panna*, if one assumes that one *panna* in fact equalled 1,000 ricefields (*na*). According to our calculation, Müang Sat had 0,5 *panna* and as for Müang Cuat and Müang Hang only 0,1 *panna*, i.e., one *pakna*. Could one *panna*, as a result of this, spread over several smaller *müang*, whereas a very large *müang* embraced numerous *panna*? Were *müang* and *panna* two completely different categories, which do not fit in the hierarchical scheme, but represent parallel existing administrative concepts? Whereas the *müang* represents the older concept, which consisted of old family organisations and units based on villages and urban settlements, the *panna* was obviously a later structure imposed on the network of *müang*, which facilitated the capital the political and economic penetration of the country.

That is to say there was a close connection between the *panna* and the local irrigation system (*rabop müang fai* ระบบเหมืองฝาย). Many *panna* were named after rivers or canals. *Panna* Fang Kaen, one of the largest *panna* in Lan Na, covers 30,000

rai of rice-cultivated areas, which are irrigated by three tributaries of Kaen. Fang had three (according to other accounts, five) *panna*, which were defined by three (or five) canals and divided from one another.²⁷⁷ Villages, which shared water resources — rivers, streams, canals — and had common interests in utilising and maintaining them, formed a *panna*. Thus *panna* were co-operation orientated agricultural production units. Recruiting labour forces and levying taxes and tributes on the basis of the system of *panna* was therefore significant.

The importance of local irrigation for the system of *panna* is obvious in the case of Sipsòng Panna. In 1570 the Lü organised the *müang*, which were united under the leadership of Chiang Rung, into 30 units by taking over the *panna* that had been introduced in Lan Na since several centuries.²⁷⁸ A total of 12 *panna* were organised, six on each side of the Mekong. The tributaries of the river partitioned the various *panna* from one another.²⁷⁹ The 12 *panna* comprised of each two to five of the old *müang*, which remained as administrative units under the *panna* level. The country of the Lü since then is called Sipsòng Panna, “[country of the] twelve *panna*”.²⁸⁰

The *panna* system of Lan Na seems to have survived the Burmese conquest. The evidence of its existence can be established in the chronicles until the early 18th century.²⁸¹ In a later period, the term *panna* was increasingly used as an equivalent to the term *müang*. The 65 *panna* of Chiang Saen, which were mentioned in the “Yonok Chronicle”, comprised of the sphere of influence of Chiang Saen after the town on the Mekong (since 1701/02), had been step-by-step upgraded by the Burmans to the political centre of Lan Na and of the adjacent regions (but without the old core region Chiang Mai-Lamphun). Hence, among the *panna* of Chiang Saen one finds several *panna* called *müang* — such as Müang Yòng, Müang Len Nüa, Müang Len Tai, Chiang Dao and Müang Phayak —, that once controlled more than one *panna*.²⁸² A well-known literary work of the Yuan, the *Khao kawila* (Poem of King Kawila, r. 1782–1816), used the term *panna* as synonym of *müang*. The term *tang panna*

²⁷⁷ See AROONRUT 1989: 9.

²⁷⁸ SUMIT 1983: 129. See also LEMOINE 1987 and DHIDA 1989.

²⁷⁹ THONGTHAEM 1989.

²⁸⁰ This literal translation is, however, problematic because *panna* is here used for administrative purposes and no longer signified exactly “1,000 rice fields”.

²⁸¹ One version of the “Chronicle of Chiang Saen” reported around 1607 on the “75 *panna* of Chiang Saen” (๗๕ พันนาเชียงแสน). Moreover, the chronicle mentions that in 1637/38 the Burmese King Suttho Thammaracha (Tha-lun) appointed a certain Mün Luang Sulalücai as the administrator of the “region of the six *panna* Taeng” (tr. แคว้นหกพันนาแตง). See CSC-TMCS, SRISAKARA 1984: 277, 280.

A manuscript gives the most recent reference to the persistence system of the *panna*, and in fact in Chiang Saen, for the year 1709/10: The governor (*phò müang*) and the notables (*khun sanam*) of Chiang Saen resolved to divide Chiang Saen [among themselves]. Two thirds of the land shall be given to Moya Nguan Chakhai (โมยะหงวนชคหาย), the Burmese sitkè, and one third to the twelve *khun sanam*. The seven “*panna* on the left side” (*panna sai*) shall be ruled by Chao Na Sai, the eight “*panna* on the right side” (*panna khwa*) by Cao Na Khwa and eventually the nine central *panna* (*panna müang*) were ruled by the ruler (*cao*) himself. See SRI 81.069.05.038–038: *Lamdap latcakun wongsa müang lan na*, ff° 24/3–25/2.

²⁸² PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 285–86. An undated manuscript from the monastery Si Khom Kham names eleven *panna* from Chiang Khòng, which were all indicated as *müang*, Müang Luai and Müang Ngao as well. See MS, Hundius Microfilm Documentation, No. 599, Roll 17: *Tamnan ciang saen ciang hai*, f° 25.

(ต่างพินนา) is used here as having the same meaning as the more colloquial term *tang müang* (ต่างเมือง), which can be rendered as “foreign country”.²⁸³

It appears as if in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, the original meaning of *panna*, associated with wet rice cultivation, had disappeared and the separation from the older meaning of *müang* became gradually blurred. *Müang* and *panna* became almost completely interchangeable, until the use of the word *müang* disappeared in the first half of the 18th century. This might be the reason for the relative late introduction of an administration based on the *panna* in Sipsòng Panna, and why the *panna* was used there from the beginning as a political-administrative category without obvious reference to agricultural organisation. According to one source, the term *panna* is written in Lü like *phara* (พารา),²⁸⁴ which is a Siamese synonym for *müang*.²⁸⁵

At the beginning of this section, evidence for the existence of the *panna* system was provided. It could be demonstrated that not only the earliest, but also the most numerous and striking evidences are related to Phayao. The political centre of Phayao was located on the eastern bank of a big inland lake (Kwan Phayao), which was supported by the Ing and several other rivers. In the case of Phayao the function of *panna* within the local irrigation system will be especially cleared in manuscript sources. Perhaps an administration based on *panna* existed in Phayao already at the beginning of the 11th century, and it was enforced in the following period on Ngoen Yang (Chiang Saen), Chiang Rai, und Fang. After the conquest of Hariphunchai, Mangrai also introduced the *panna* system in the South and West of Lan Na. In the year 1340s, King Pha Yu is said to have divided Chiang Tung into 7,500 *na*.²⁸⁶ Although one knows the names of some *panna* in the area of Chiang Mai (e.g., the *panna* Kum Kam and Fang Kaen), the exact divisions of such important *müang* like Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang, are transmitted. As for Phrae and Nan, historical evidence for the existence of a *panna* system does not exist.²⁸⁷ Perhaps, the system was not implemented until the time after the conquest of the two *müang* by Tilok in the mid-15th century. A conclusive assessment of the *panna* system, concerning its origin as well as its historical development, is only feasible on the basis of a careful study of the extensive corpus of Northern Thai manuscripts.

6.3 The Demographic Dimension

The political importance and the economic potential of Lan Na, like that of her neighbours and rivals, depended strongly upon the composition and distribution of her population. Unfortunately no reliable statistical data, on which one could draw conclusions on the demographic situation in Lan Na before the end of the 18th century, is available. Censuses ought to have been carried out in early periods, as the late 11th century census of Phayao, discussed in the previous section, demonstrates. However, the census figures, probably having mainly symbolic character, are

²⁸³ *Khao kawila — chabap singkha wannasai* 1985: 18.

²⁸⁴ This word, pronounced in Siamese as /phaaraa/, leads to the names of the holy Indian town Vārā[ṇasī], the Benares of today.

²⁸⁵ *Prawat khwaen sipsòng panna* 1982: 29.

²⁸⁶ CTC-PMCT, THAWI 1990: 34; CTC-JSC, SĀIMÖNG 1981: 235–36.

²⁸⁷ The “Chronicle of Nan” and other sources originated from Nan do not at all mention the term *panna*. A vague reference is found only in the “Chronicle of Chiang Mai”. In the years 1486/87, as it is said, the Siamese troops attacked on Müang Hin, a *luk panna* of Nan (tr. ลูกพินนาเมืองน่าน). See CCM-HP, WYATT und AROONRUT 1995: 102; CMC-TPCM 1971: 69.

certainly so much exaggerated that they cannot be taken at face value for any quantitative assessment. However, some basic considerations can yet be derived from the relevant fragmentary information transmitted through chronicles and contemporary historical sources.

The census, which was conducted at the beginning of Si Còm Tham's reign, showed that in the core region of the principality of Phayao there were slightly over 100 villages, which were distributed in ten (real) *panna*. If a village had an average of 150 to 250 inhabitants, the population of the region, where almost one seventh of today's Northern Thai population live, ought to be between 15,000 and 25,000 inhabitants.²⁸⁸ Even if it is problematic to project the size of the population in the other regions of Lan Na, because of considerable demographic changes over the centuries, it is probably not unrealistic to argue that the total population in the 12th and 13th centuries lay in the range between 100,000 to 200,000 people. The population of Sukhothai was small as well. In the core region of the kingdom that extended in the south to Nakhòn Sawan, the 14th century population did not exceed 300,000 people.²⁸⁹

As to the plain of the Ping river, where at present almost one quarter of the five million inhabitants of Northern Thailand live, the Japanese historian Yoneo Ishii estimates the population at the end of the 13th century at probably over 100,000. Ishii's calculation is based on the consideration that the Ai Fa canal (เหมืองอ้ายฟ้า) constructed under King Yiba, the last ruler of Hariphunchai, which was the prototype for the Mae Faek Irrigation Project that was completed in 1933, irrigates an area of 70,000 *rai* [11,000 ha] today.

If we assume that the thirty-four kilometres of canal excavated under Kun Fa allowed 10,000 hectares of new paddy fields to be developed, and that, at 80 percent of today's level, the yield was between 2.0 and 2.4 tons per hectare, the annual production from a single rainy season crop must have been between 20,000 and 24,000 tons of paddy. With an annual per capital consumption of 225 kilograms of paddy, this area alone could have comfortably supported between 89,000 and 110,000 people, a figure clearly in excess of a village population."²⁹⁰

Ishii's assumption of the production of rice per hectare (80% of today's level) seems to be very optimistic, and he does not give a better reason for it. Ishii further argues that the construction of the Ai Fa Canal required materials and workers, which were far beyond the capacity of a small community of settlement. This second argument seems to be quite convincing. He concludes: "Some form of state involvement is implied".²⁹¹

Dhida Saraya sees a close connection between religious donations and the expansion of settlements in the region of today's Thailand. The rulers of Dvaravati and Lopburi, later also the ruler of Sukhothai, had attempted to expand their territories into previously mostly unpopulated new land by means of donating land and labourers to Buddhist monasteries. The new religious centres and the supporting villages

²⁸⁸ In the year 1980 there were 4,4 million people living in the eight northern provinces of Thailand, among them about 600,000 were living in the province of Phayao and *amphoe* Phan and Pa Daet, which were historically under Phayao, but today belonging to Chiang Rai. See *Sammano phrachakòn lae kheha* [...] 1980: 5–6.

²⁸⁹ This estimation is based on the calculation of the Thai archaeologist Phaitun Saisawang, quoted in NAKHÒN 1985: 23.

²⁹⁰ ISHII 1978: 21.

²⁹¹ ISHII 1978: 22.

received from the rulers often generous material advantages, which gave them a quasi-model character. They could attract more settlers so as to reclaim additional land for cultivation in the region and establish more new villages. In this way the newly developed regions prospered. Since the king as “ruler of the land” (*phra cao phaendin* พระเจ้าแผ่นดิน) possessed the privileges of such a donation, the founding of monasteries, the expansion of settlements and the consolidation of the royal sphere of influence developed parallel to one another. For Lan Na Dhida shows in the paradigm of the founding of Chiang Saens (1328):

The land was donated to religion; manpower was assigned to maintain the monastery and to work the land. Craftsmen were donated. The donated land was fixed and made the domain of Wat Pasak. We can speculate that the purpose of the donation was not only religious but for community expansion, and the communities would contain people of many groups. A religious centre was founded and the lands were cultivated, contributing to the expansion of Chiangsaen. [...]”²⁹²

Not only the *saṅgha*, but also the king in Chiang Mai, received land taxes from the cultivation of monastery estates, namely one tenth of the produce.²⁹³ In the second half of the 15th century, donations to monasteries had taken on considerable dimensions (see Table 5). One of the most spectacular donations of land to a monastery occurred in 1402, at the beginning of Sam Fang Kaen’s reign. It was a donation made by the king and his mother. Rice fields comprising 21,685 units of measurement (called *khao*, “rice, paddy” — the size of a field was measured by the amount of seed-rice needed for sowing) and numerous temple serfs (in more than 246 households) were donated to the monastery Suwanna Maha Wihan in Phayao.²⁹⁴ The largest number of monastic endowments took place in the years between 1476 and 1501, namely during the reigns of Tilok, Nōt Chiang Rai, and Mūang Kao. It was during this period that the inscription of Wat Mūn Lō, dated 1487/88, elucidated the tax exemption for the new rural settlers.²⁹⁵ However, one has to point at the fact that King Tilok, who was an ardent supporter and protector of the “new Sinhalese” Wat Pa Daeng sect, ordered the destruction of inscriptions in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun region, the centre of royal power, because all donations of land and manpower to monasteries, which had been performed according to the rite of the Suan Dōk sect, were no longer considered as religious merits (*puñña*).²⁹⁶ Note the hiatus of 56 years between the donation to Wat Kao Yōt (Phayao, in 1412) and to Wat Canthara-arma (Chiang Rai, in 1468). It seems that in the northeastern *mūang* (Chiang Rai, Chiang

²⁹² DHIDA 1982: 160–61.

²⁹³ DHIDA (1982: 176) emphasises: “... the ruler of Chiangmai, associated with religious cults, could claim his rights to land. This was reinforced by land endowment. The donation of land was an effective and practical means for the king to control the expansion of land in Chiangmai kingdom or at least ensure that rights to land were recognised. Only the king and his family were the donors of land. The king himself had authority to grant land to other individuals or officials. Thus they were bound to him.”

²⁹⁴ Inscription “Lamphun 9”, in: YUPHIN 1988a: 231.

²⁹⁵ YUPHIN 1988a: 91.

²⁹⁶ Prof. Dr. Prasert na Nagara points to this fact in his preface to the new edition of the *Mūlasāsanā Chronicle*. See PRASERT and PUANGKHAM 1994: 8. In Lamphun only the famous inscription of Wat Phra Yūn survived possibly because it was situated in a forest outside the town.

Saen and Phayao), Tilok's orders were not always implemented.²⁹⁷ Thus Table 5 distorts both the spacial and the chronological distribution of monastic endowments in Lan Na. There is evidence that in some cases temple serfs were transferred from a long-established monastery to a newly founded one, eventually leading to the abandonment of the former.²⁹⁸

At that time, the king of Lan Na pursued therefore a policy to actively promoting the expansion of agricultural land with the aim to increase rice production for a growing population. In the Northern Thai customary laws numerous evidences of these efforts of the king of Chiang Mai can be found. The *mangraisat* (Wat Chaiyasathan version) warns that the state does not need people, who are “too comfortable to build villages and establish dams, [...] the land [consequently] was destroyed”. The population should rather aim at building villages, canals and dams, so that luck would prevail.²⁹⁹ In particular fallow lands shall be cultivated, “so that they are converted to rice fields and garden lands and villages are established.”³⁰⁰ One version of the *mangraisat* (from Wat Mün Ngoen Kòng) even demands: “Do not allow that ruler, aristocrats and free communities, the entire people, to preserve [such] forests, which shall better be cleared and cultivated and turned into rice fields for them.”³⁰¹ The rural work force was highly appreciated by the ruling class because it was in short supply and was needed for clearing and cultivating the extensive wasteland. As for taxation, there was no lack of incentives to assure a low tax liability:

Commoners, who make an effort to clear forests and grasslands, to reclaim overgrown rice fields for cultivation, as well as to till spoiled garden land — in short, to use land for cultivation and settlements — shall have the right to earn their livelihood [without having to pay taxes for a period of] three years. Only after that are taxes raised. [This is done] so that the commoners would aim at building villages, constructing canals and dams so as to enable them to live in happiness and affluence. Those who found settlements, construct canals and dams, cultivate rice fields and work in gardens are the subjects of the land. According to the promise of the ruler, they shall receive their wages. [...]³⁰²

Though Northern Thai customary law texts evoke the impression that the state was interested in converting wasteland into fertile rice fields, they also report of tenants in more densely populated areas who had to work on rice fields which were not their own, one third of the harvest had to be delivered as land rent to the owner.³⁰³ It seems that the expansion of agricultural land during the 14th and 15th centuries took place mainly in the outer *müang*. The development of settlements came to a halt in the first half of the 16th century, which is reflected by the drastic decrease in monastery donations in the final stage of the final years of Müang Kaeo's reign. As a result of

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Several cases from Chiang Rai are reported by RAWIWAN (1982: 155). For example, in 1468 the governor of Chiang Rai donated 20 families, originally attached to Wat Chiang Lò, to the new monastery Wat Canthara-aram.

²⁹⁹ *Mangraisat chabap wat chaiyasathan*, quoted from YUPHIN 1988a: 92.

³⁰⁰ Quoted from *ibid.* [tr. ที่อู่ปลูกเป็นนาเป็นสวนเป็นบ้านดี].

³⁰¹ *Mangraisat chabap wat mün ngoen kòng*, quoted from YUPHIN 1988a: 92.

³⁰² *Mangraisat chabap wat chiang man*, quoted from YUPHIN 1988a: 91; cf. *Mangraisat chabap wat sao hai*, GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1977a: 152.

³⁰³ See SAOWANI 1996: 30.

heavy casualties suffered in the campaign against Ayutthaya, natural population growth in Lan Na likewise remained stagnant. Perhaps, the demographic development even took a declining course around 1515, and landed in a vicious cycle caused by war, loss of population, a fall in rice production, sinking in tax revenue, economic crisis, and political anarchy.

Table 6: Monastic endowments in Lan Na (c. 1300–1700)

Inscription (registr.-no.)	Year of inscription	Year of donation	Name of monastery or donator*	monastery serfs (<i>kha wat</i>)	land / animals
Phrae 1	1339	1339	Wat Bang Sanuk (Phrae)	1 family	animals
Lamphun 9	1411	1411	Wat Suwanna Maha Wihan (Phayao), king and queen mother	246 households (<i>hüan</i>)	rice fields (<i>na</i>) of 21,685 measures of <i>khao</i> (seed-rice), annual paddy tax: 4.686.000 <i>bia</i> or cowry shells
Phayao 44	1411?	1411?	King and queen	---	rice field(s)
Phayao 47	1411?	1411?	Wat Suwanna Maha Wihan (Phayao), king and queen mother	11 villages	rice field of 975 measures of <i>khao</i>
Lamphun 12	1412	1412	Wat Kao Yöt (Phayao)	---	rice field of 500 measures of <i>khao</i>
Chiang Rai 1	1468	1468	Wat Canthara-aram (Chiang Rai)	20 families	rice field of 300 measures of <i>khao</i>
---	1469	1469	Wat Ban Laeng (Lampang?)	donation to the monastery by the population of the village of the same name	---
PSC, Vol. 3, No. 65	1476	1476	Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang (Lampang)	5 (4+1) families	2 rice fields of 300 measures of <i>khao</i>
Chiang Rai 33	1479	1479	Wat Ban Yang Mak Muang (Chiang Rai)	20 monks	rice field of 20 measures of <i>khao</i> , annual paddy tax: 5.000 <i>bia</i>
Chiang Mai 10	1480	1480	Ku Wat Sao Hin (Chiang Mai)	20 families	rice field of 250 measures of <i>khao</i>
Lamphun 21	1484	1484	Wat Tham Phra (Chiang Rai)	---	rice field (old), annual paddy tax: 50,000 <i>bia</i> rice field (new), annual paddy tax: 82,000 <i>bia</i>
Lamphun 28	1485	1485	Wat Pa Ruak (Chiang Rai)	1 family (4 persons)	---
Phayao 2	1488	1488	Wat Dòn Kham	20 families	---
Chiang Rai 61	1488	1488	Wat Phu Khing (Chiang Rai)	4 families	9 rice fields; annual paddy tax: 20.900 <i>bia</i> ;
Chiang Rai 61	1488	1488	Wat Pa Tan (Chiang Rai)	1 family	3 rice fields, annual paddy tax: 6,000 <i>bia</i>
Lamphun 18	1488	1488	Wat Weluwan Aram (Lamphun)	4 families	---

Lamphun 31	1489	1489	Wat Kan Thom (Chiang Mai)	4 villages (a); 4 villages und 12 persons (b)	---
Lamphun 23	1489	1489	Wat Khuam Chum Kaeo (Lamphun)	17 (10+3+4) families	---
--- (National Museum, Chiang Saen)	1489	1489	Wat Mahawan (near Chiang Saen?)	6 families; 1 village (for salt production)	rice field(s)
Phayao 9	1489	1489	Wat Phraya Ruang (Phayao)	---	rice field(s)
Phayao 57	1490		Wat Klang (Phayao)	4 persons, purchased by 8,000 <i>ngoen</i>	---
Phayao 4	1492	1492	Wat Wisuttharam (Phayao)	several persons	---
Phayao 6	1493	1493	Wat Nang Mūn (Phayao)	10 families	rice field of 4 measures of <i>khao</i> , annual paddy tax: 2,500 <i>bia</i>
Phayao 26	1494	1494	Wat Aram Pa Nòi (Phayao)	2 families (1 man, 4 women)	---
Phayao 7	1495	1495	Wat Aram Pa Ya (Phayao)	13 families	rice fields; 2 areca trees, tax: 2,000 <i>bia</i>
Phayao 27	1495	1495	Wat Li (Phayao)	10 families (for monastery), 6 villages for special services (f.e. provision of salt)	rice fields of 1265 measures of <i>khao</i> , annual paddy tax: 818,000 <i>bia</i>
Phayao 39	1495	1495	Wat Còi Sae (Phayao)	20 families	---
Chiang Rai 3	1496	1496	Wat Prasat (Chiang Rai)	10 families	rice fields, annual paddy tax: 100,000 <i>bia</i>
Lampang 6	1496	1496	Wat Ban Dan (Phayao)	10 families	rice fields, annual paddy tax: 300,000 <i>bia</i>
PSC, Vol. 3, No. 70	1496	1496	Wat Prathat Lampang Luang (Lampang)	13 (7+6) families, purchased by 5,480 (2,810+2,670) <i>ngoen</i>	
Chiang Mai 4	1497	1497	Wat Kaeo Lat (Chiang Mai)	1 family and another 4 persons	---
Chiang Rai 63	1497	1497	Wat Dusita Aram (Chiang Rai)	17 families	---
Phayao 8	1497	1489 1497	Wat Pa Mai (Phayao) Wat Pa Mai (Phayao)	--- 30 families, 20 for Buddha image, 5 for <i>ubosot</i> and <i>hò pitok</i> each	rice field(s) rice field(s)
Phayao 9	1498	1498	Wat Phaya Ruang (Phayao)	---	rice field of 200 measures of <i>khao</i>
Phayao 59	1498	1498	Wat Mūn Lò (Phayao)	---	28 rice fields of 1984 measures of <i>khao</i> ; 1 rice field of 6 <i>rai</i> and 12 measues of <i>khao</i>
Nan 2	1500	1500	Wat Muang Phong	29 families	2 rice fields of 60

			(Wat Phra Koet, Nan)		measures of <i>khao</i>
Lamphun 26	1501 (?)	1501	Wat Mahapho (Chiang Rai)	113 (74+39) families	rice field(s)
Phayao 28	1501	1501	Cao Mùn Lò Mongkhon (Phayao)	6 families	---
ข.น. 4/2539	1502	1502	Wat Uthumphòn Aram (Chiang Mai)	10 families	---
Chiang Rai 5	1502	1502	Wat Si Sutthawat (Chiang Rai)	12 families (45 persons) purchased by 3,950 <i>ngoen</i>)	---
Phayao 10	1503	1503	Wat Ban Dòn (Phayao)	7 families	---
Lamphun 15	1509	1500	Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai (Lamphun)	12 families	rice fields; annual paddy tax: 2,000,000 <i>bia</i>
Phayao 49	1510	1510	King (via Cao Wan Mahat)	more than 9 families	---
Lamphun 34	1512	1489	Wat Suwannaram (Lanphun), king's grandmother (donator)	---	rice field(s)
Lamphun 34	1512	1512	Wat Suwannaram (Lamphun), king's grandmother (donator)	10 families	6 rice fields, annual paddy tax: 1,000,000 <i>bia</i>
Phayao 1	1513	1466	Wat Nòng Kwang (Phayao)	1 village	rice field of 30 measures of <i>khao</i> ;
Phayao 1	1514	1513	Wat Nòng Kwang (Phayao)		annual paddy tax: 9,000 <i>bia</i> ; and areca-plantation
Phayao 13	1516	1516	Wat Sipsòng Hòng (Phayao)	2 families	---
Phayao 16	1516	1516	Phayao (?), Cao Si (donator)	12 families	---
พ.บ. 415/2524	1520	1520	Wat Phra Koet (Chiang Rai)	1 family	1 rice field, annual paddy tax: 6,000 <i>bia</i>
Chiang Mai 26	1523	1523	Wat Yang Num (Chiang Rai)	3 families	rice fields, annual paddy tax: 60,000 <i>bia</i>
Phayao 14	1523	1523	Wat Luang (Chiang Rai)	10 families	rice fields
Phrae 9	1529	1529	Wat Buppharam (Phrae)	5 families	rice field of 1,000 measures of <i>khao</i>
Lamphun 12	1535	1535	Wat Phaya Ruang (Phayao)	15 households (<i>hüan</i> , 20 of which were men)	---
--- (National Museum, Chiang Mai)	1554	1554	Wat Chiang Sa (Chiang Rai, on the west bank of the Mekong)	5 (3+2) families	rice field(s)
Chiang Mai 7	1560	1560	Wat Luang (Chiang Mai)	4 villages	rice field(s), annual paddy tax: 5,000 <i>bia</i>
---	1581	1581	---	2 villages (487 persons listed, and 45 slave families)	---
Phayao 53	1595	1584	Wat Ban Yang (Phayao)	several families	---
		1595	Wat Ban Yang	several families	

Chiang Rai 6	1605	under Mangrai-dynasty	(Phayao) Wat Phra Luang	„500“ families of Milakkhu background (Luo?)	---
Lamphun 17	1611	1611	Wat Mahathat Chiang Lae (Chiang Rai)	---	rice field of 200 <i>rai</i>
Chiang Rai 7	1617	1617	Wat Pha Khao Pan (Chiang Rai)	52 persons (including 25 men and 27 women)	areca plantation
Chiang Rai 10	?	?	---	---	rice field(s)
---	?	?	Wat Maha Sathan (in Chiang Kham, Chiang Rai province)	several workers	---
Phayao 19	?	?	?	---	rice field of 100 measures of <i>khao</i>
Phayao 37	?	?	Wat Thong Saeng (Phayao)	18 (14+4) families	---
Phayao 38	?	?	Wat Thong Saeng (Phayao)	4 persons	rice field(s)
Phayao 48	?	?	Wat Khwang (Phayao)	1 family (for Buddha image)	---
Phayao 58	?	?	Wat Khao Ratchasathan (Phayao)	10 families	---

Explanations:

? Year of the inscription is not recorded.

--- No information on this topic included in the inscription.

* Province in brackets, if not in accordance with the Province indicated in the inscription register (column 1).

Sources: *Carük lan na* 1991 (Part 1: Inscriptions from Chiang Rai, Nan, Phayao and Phrae);

Prachum carük müang phayao 1995;

Penth/Phanphen/Silao (Vols. 1, 3 and 4) 1997–2000;

Prachum sila carük — PSC (Vol. 3) 1965.

THOEM and PRASAN 1974.

6.4 Forced Resettlement during the Mangrai Dynasty

As a reaction to especially severe population losses, King Müang Kaeo encouraged immigration from the Shan and Khün regions to Lan Na. In the year 1517 alone more than 23,000 people migrated to Lan Na from the three Shan principalities, Chiang Thong, Müang Nai, and Müang Kai. The immigrants, who were obviously induced by the prospect of getting fertile land and receiving other preferential treatments, arrived with 38 elephants and 250 horses, as reported by the chronicles. They found new places of settlements in all parts of Lan Na. The ruler of Müang Kai settled with 1,200 followers in Fang. Another important region for resettlement was Phrao, located 80 km in the north of Chiang Mai.³⁰⁴ The resettlement obviously

³⁰⁴ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 106; CMC-TPCM 1971: 70; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 61; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 148–49; see also PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 366. A manuscript (Hundius Collection: *Pün wongsa mahakhasat tanglai* [...], f° 52) mentions only 2,322 [instead of 23,220] resettlers, among them 200 [instead of 1,200] found their homes in Fang. Most probably the discrepancies in the numerical data could be traced back to errors attributed to the scribes, because another copy of the same chronicle (ibid., ff° 82/5–83/2), as far as the numerical data on the resettlers are concerned, conforms with other sources.

helped to cover the increasing demand of labour force for the ambitious construction projects of Müang Kaeo, such as the renovation of the city walls of Chiang Mai and Lamphun (c. 1517). However, the influx of Shan was only partially based on voluntary migration, because at the beginning of February 1520, a part of the Shan, who came to Lan Na, returned to their homes on Salween with the soldiers of the King in pursuit.³⁰⁵

Half a century earlier, in 1462/3, King Tilok launched a military campaign against the Shan State of Müang Nai, a campaign for which he was asked by rivalling Shan rulers. This campaign resulted in the subjugation of Müang Nai and eleven other Shan *müang* situated mainly on the west bank of the Salween river, i.e., beyond the sphere of influence of Chiang Mai. The pacification of these regions did not result in the annexation by the victor, but in the deportation of a significant part of their inhabitants to the core region of Lan Na. 12,328 war captives (*khòì* ฆို่ຍ)³⁰⁶ were resettled in Phrao, Kao Còng and in *panna* Takan, located roughly 30 km in the west of Chiang Mai.³⁰⁷

The conquered Shan *müang* were not adversaries on a par with Chiang Mai. The forced resettlement of thousands of Shan turned out to be a twofold advantage for the victor. It disciplined the subjugated polities and, at the same time, strengthened the population potential in the core area of Lan Na. However, such a strategy could be counterproductive, if the adversary possessed strong socio-political structures and was far superior in terms of demographic and economic resources. Then it was considered appropriate to act with restraint even after gaining military successes in order to avoid devastating counter-attacks. Such awareness may have motivated Tilok to criticise the governor of Nan for his rash action taken after his victory against the “Kaeo” (Vietnamese),³⁰⁸ who had attacked the neighbouring kingdom of Lan Sang (Laos) and who were also threatening the eastern parts of Lan Na. Tilok forbade the resettlement of the “Kaeo” captives in the territory of Nan as this would have strengthened the governor’s demographic and, thus, political power base. Possibly in order to prevent the hitherto autonomous vassal *müang* of Nan from challenging Tilok’s royal authority, the victorious governor was transferred to Chiang Rai which meant a demotion. The *Nan Chronicle* reports:

In the *poek set* year, C.S. 842 (AD 1480/81), the Kaeo attacked Nan with an army. Phaña Tilok ordered Tao Kha Kann to encounter them with a force of 40,000. He defeated the Kaeo and killed numerous enemies. He then cut off their heads and sent them to Phaña Tilok. He also captured elephants, horses and families, which he presented to Phaña Tilok. Hence Phaña Tilok spoke: “The Kiao [Kaeo] suffered a defeat and fled. This is enough, isn’t it? Why do you pursue the Kaeo, have them killed, and take numerous Kaeo families [as

³⁰⁵ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 106; CMC-TPCM 1971: 70; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 61; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 149; see also PY, PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 368.

³⁰⁶ PY (PRACHAKITKÒRACAK 1973: 340) translates the Northern Thai term *khòì* into the Khmer-derived loan word *chaloei*, “prisoner of war”.

³⁰⁷ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 89; CMC-TPCM 1971: 64; CMC-TSHR, SRI 1982: 51; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 134–35. On tracing the locations of *panna* Takan see NOTTON 1932: 53, fn. 2.

³⁰⁸ *Kaeo* in Northern Thai and Lao sources normally refers to Vietnam and the Vietnamese, but could also include the Tai people living in the mountainous region of North Vietnam. But in the context of the following quotation the *Kaeo* refers to Vietnam, as appears in the Lao sources. See SILA 1964: 45–46.

prisoners-of-war]? The wrath of enemies and the revenge of tigers are cruel. The Kaeo [families] shall not be settled in Nantaburi [Nan].” Then Tilok transferred Tao Kha Kan to Chiang Rai.³⁰⁹

Before the mid-15th century, Lan Na had already had larger scales of resettlement of population directed by the state, be they voluntarily migrations or forced deportation of prisoners of war. The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* reports the transfer of “500 hand workers families” from “Pagan-Ava” to Wiang Kum Kam, Chiang Tung and other places in Lan Na by Mangrai.³¹⁰ For the late 13th century, however, this episode holds little historical credibility, because evidences of military conflicts between Mangrai and the Mon in Lower Burma need to be verified by other historical sources. This was probably an event that was invented or reconstructed subsequently, so as to let the fame and splendour of the Mangrai Dynasty, in view of the humiliation suffered from the Burmese occupation, shine more brightly.

Siamese sources report a forced resettlement which went to the reverse direction — namely from Lan Na to Siam. Around 1385, troops from Ayutthaya invaded Lan Na. The Luang Prasoet Chronicle mentions only the futile attempt of conquest of Lampang (1386),³¹¹ whereas other versions of the *Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya* mention also a successful campaign of King Bòrommaracha I against Chiang Mai (1384).³¹² While the then ruler of Chiang Mai [Kü Na] was not in the position to offer resistance and left the town with some followers, his son [Ñòt Chiang Rai] surrendered and was appointed the new ruler by Bòrommatrailokanat. The Siamese king “ordered that those Lao (here: northern Thai) who had been driven down from Chiang Mai be sent on to be kept in the cities of Phatthalung, Songkhla, Nakhòn Si Thammarat and Canthabun”.³¹³ Northern Thai sources mention briefly the war with Ayutthaya but no deportation. Without giving a specific date for the event, the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* claims that the Siamese attack on both Lampang and Chiang Mai failed: “The Southerners were broken, and fled back to the South.”³¹⁴ An indirect confirmation of the Siamese version is found in the *Chiang Tung Chronicle*, according to which around 1387 Cao Ai Òn, the ruler of Chiang Tung, seeing as his duty came with his military to support the exhausted “Müang Yuan” (i.e., Lan Na) army and ended up as Siamese prisoner of war at Sukhothai.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ NC-PMN, SRI 82.107.05.043–043: *Pün wongsa mahakhasat tanglai* [...], f° 105/2–4. [tr. คั้นเด็จพระพุทธราช ๘๔๒ ตัวปลีเป็กเสต แกวเอาเลิกมาตมเมืองน่านพระยาดีโลกมีอาชญาหื้อท้าวชากานคุมเอาอิพล ๔ หมี่รอกต้อนรบแกว ท้าวชากาน มีชนะได้เข้าแกวตายมากนั้กหันแล้ว คีตัดเอาหัวแกว้วยพระยาดีโลกแล ได้ข้ามมล้าคอบคัวมาถวยพระยาดีโลกมากนั้ก หันแล้ว เมื่อนั้นพระยาดีโลกกล่าวว่ เกี้ยว[แกว]ค่านพ่ายหนีคีตีแล ดั่งหรือ พ้อยไล่แกวเอาครอบครัวแกวมาเปอนอันมากจันนี้ เวนเลิกเวนเสือนี้บตีชะแล บ่ควรหื้อมัน้อยในเมือง นันทบุรีที่นี้แล ว่าอันแล้ว คีหื้อท้าวชากานไปอยู่เชียงรายหันแล] See also NC-PMN-W, WYATT 1994: 57. The more liberal English translation of Wyatt deviates slightly from that of the present writer.

³¹⁰ CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 38; CMC-TPCM 1971: 24; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 51–52; PY, PRACHAKITKORACAK 1973: 261–62.

³¹¹ PPKSA-LP, PP 1/1 1963: 132.

³¹² Whereas the PPKSA-LP dates the attack on Lampang at 1386 in accordance with the CMC, according to other versions of the Ayutthaya Chronicle this took place already in 1382 followed two years later (followed two years later) by a successful war against Chiang Mai. See CUSHING 2000: 12.

³¹³ CUSHMAN 2000: 13.

³¹⁴ Quoted from CMC-HP, WYATT/AROONRUT 1995: 66. *JinaKlamāṭīpakaraṇam*, on the other hand, fails to mention the Siamese invasion at all. See JKM, RATANAPAÑÑA 1968: 127–28.

³¹⁵ See CTC-PMCT, THAWI 1990: 35–36. However, these events are not mentioned in CTC-JSC, SĀIMÖNG 1981: 237–38.

During the fierce struggles for hegemony between Lan Na and Ayutthaya over the region Sukhothai-Phitsanulok, the increasing superior strategies that aimed at persistently weakening the opponents through depopulation of the frontier regions gained momentum. Vague clues in the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya* (Luang Prasoert version) on deportations from Lan Na to Siam around 1444/45³¹⁶ could not be substantiated in the Northern Thai sources. In 1461 Tilok suppressed a rebellion in Chaliang (Si Satchanalai), for a decade a southern outpost of Chiang Mai.³¹⁷ For probable vengeance, the inhabitants of the pottery town famous for its ceramic were deported to Wiang Kalòng (Chiang Rai) and San Kamphaeng (Chiang Mai), where they founded the “Northern Thai school” of the Sangkhalok-Sukhothai pottery.³¹⁸

From 1507 onwards, Lan Na under King Müang Kaeo increased their lightning attacks deep into the territory formerly belonging to Sukhothai. The operations were not aimed at a permanent conquest of the southern frontier regions then occupied by Ayutthaya, but for the deportation of the population there. Müang Kaeo probably wanted to create a depopulated buffer zone to counteract the unrestrained long-term expansion of Ayutthaya to the North. To enlarge the impaired basis of his population was another motivation for Chiang Mai’s attacks, which are to be viewed in the context with the above-discussed mass migration of the Shan around 1517. The Siamese reacted with a similar strategy, through which they deported numerous war captives from the southern peripheral regions of Lan Na such as Phrae and Lampang. The military interventions of Ayutthaya in the conflict of succession to the throne of Northern Thai in 1545/46 prevented further raids of the Yuan on the region around Sukhothai.³¹⁹

7. Concluding Remarks

Contrary to a still widely accepted view, Lan Na was never a unified kingdom with Chiang Mai as her undisputed political centre. This had not been even the case during Lan Na’s “golden age” in the 15th century. Lan Na chronicles, notably the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* and *Jinakālamālipakaraṇam*, tend to overemphasise the role of Chiang Mai in the history of the region. In the case of the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* this is not surprising as this chronicle was composed in the early 19th century³²⁰ during the time when the Kawila dynasty sought to legitimise its power by “constructing” an uninterrupted hegemony of Chiang Mai from the late 13th century until the early Bangkok period. The region of Chiang Saen and Chiang Rai, which was largely

³¹⁶ PPKSA-LP (PP 1/1 1963: 135) mentions a Siamese attack on the municipality/township (*tambon*) Pathai Kasem. A total of more than “120,000 prisoners of war” were captured. WOOD (1924: 83) means that it must have been concerning an unable to locate “Pathai Kasem”, a place in the vicinity of Chiang Mai.

³¹⁷ CMC-HP, WYATT/ARONRUT 1995: 88–89; CMC-TPCM 1971: 71; CMC-N, NOTTON 1932: 123–24. See also GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1976: 137 and 148–49.

³¹⁸ On Tilok’s military expedition in 1461/62 to the region in Sukhothai and Phitsanulok see PPKSA-LP, PP 1/1 1963: 136. *Lilit yuan phai* also mentions the inhabitants of Chaliang that were deported by the Yuan troops. See GRISWOLD and PRASERT 1976: 149.

³¹⁹ See USANEE 1983: 129; PRITSANA 1973: 46.

³²⁰ WYATT and ARONRUT (1995: xxxi) argue, not entirely convincingly, that the unknown author wrote the CMC in 1827/28 (the last entry is dated 26 January 1828) under the impression of two epochal events: the anti-Siamese rebellion of the Lao king Cao Anu (1827) and the Burmese defeat in the first war against the British (1826).

depopulated during the first half of the 19th century, is portrayed in a particularly negative light. However, if we consider Chinese sources of the 14th and 15th centuries, such as the *Ming Shilu* or *Mingshi gao*, we arrive at the conclusion that the Chiang Mai-centred view as reflected in the much later composed Northern Thai chronicles has to be revised. During the Ming times (1368–1644), at least three regions, which were different with regards to their respective geo-strategic positions as well as their ethno-historical character, can be distinguished.

The first zone was in the northeast, comprising the plains of Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen as well as of Phayao, irrigated by tributaries of the Mekong river (Kok, Ing). This was the region where the ethnogenesis of the Tai Yuan (Yonok) took place in the 11th and 12th centuries. Here was the heartland of the Lao Cong dynasty, from which the ruling houses of both Chiang Mai (Mangrai and his successors) and Phayao (until its incorporation into the Lan Na realm in 1339) descended. The second zone was in the southwest, where until the late 13th century the Mon-Lua dominated polity of Hariphunchai had maintained close political and economic relations with Sukhothai and the Mon in Lower Burma. By the founding of a new capital — Chiang Mai (1296) — on the foot of the Dòì Suthep mountain, one of the most sacred mountains of the autochthonous Lua population, the foundations were laid for the rise of a state that dominated the heartland of the Indochina peninsula between the Mekong river (in the east) and the Salween river (in the west). A third zone in the east, comprising the *müang* of Nan and Phrae, became rather lately, in the mid-15th century, an integrated part of the Lan Na polity. Nan and Phrae were oriented towards the upper section of the Cao Phraya river basin (having strong bonds with Sukhothai). Their experience as an integral part of the Lan Na polity lasted slightly more than one century. Under Burmese tutelage their fate became less and less determined by Chiang Mai and Chiang Saen, and during the early Bangkok period (since 1782), they reasserted their relatively independent position vis-à-vis Chiang Mai.

After Mangrai's death centrifugal forces gained the upper hand again. The dichotomy of Lan Na defined by the two different river systems, as outlined above, prevailed in the second quarter of the 14th century, when Lan Na kings ruled again, though temporarily, from their original base area at the Upper Mekong. Chiang Saen, founded by King Saen Phu as his new residential city in 1327/28, remained the political and commercial centre of “Northeast Lan Na”, even after the royal capital was transferred back to Chiang Mai in 1339 (JKM), or 1345 (CMC).

Notwithstanding attempts to centralise the administrative structure, notably during the reign of King Tilok (1441–1487), Lan Na nevertheless resembled a conglomerate of large autonomous *müang* rather than an empire built around a consolidated core region as has been more or less the case for Ayutthaya (Siam) and Ava (Burma). Even in the phase of her greater expansion of power during the second half of the 15th century, the *müang* of the Northeast maintained a high degree of autonomy. In an inscription from Phayao dated 25 April 1490³²¹ the governor of Phayao, Cao Si MÜN, then king of Lan Na, Phaña Nòt Chiang Rai is called “ruler of the city at the Ping river” (*pha pen cao müang ping* พระเป็นเจ้าเมืองพิง),³²² indicating at least a mental distance of the governor to the political and cultural centre of Lan Na.

³²¹ The sixth day of the waxing moon in the sixth month of the *kot set* year C.S. 852.

³²² Inscription “Phayao 3”, *Prachum silacarük phayao* 1995: 112. See also inscription “Phayao 7” of the year C.S. 957 [A.D. 1495/96], which mentions King (Phaña) Nòt Chiang Rai and his mother as “the two royal highnesses from the city at the Ping river” *pha pen cao müang ping tang sòng*).

In the period of decline (1526–1558) the North-South-dichotomy deepened. However, it was evident already at the beginning of the 15th century to the Chinese who had established two de facto independent “Military-cum-Civilian Pacification Commissions” on Lan Na territory: Babai-dadian (Chiang Mai) and Babai-zhenai (Chiang Saen).³²³ The division of Lan Na into two rivalling core regions further intensified during the centuries that followed the Burmese conquest of 1558.

During most of the 15th century Lan Na maintained smooth tributary relations, albeit with interruptions,³²⁴ with Ming China. These relations flourished after the war of 1405/06, which both sides interpreted as a victory. The crucial support King Tilok gave to the Lao in their struggle against the Dai Viet invaders enhanced the prestige of Lan Na as a reliable vassal state in the eyes of the Ming court. Economic and trade relations between Lan Na and China, including the transfer of military technology, were equally important factors during the 15th century.

³²³ *Mingshi*, Chap. 315, p. 8161; *Mingshi gao* 189, 36a; LIEW n.d.: 12, taken from *Taizong Shilu* 31.563-64 (Yongle 2, 5th month, jisi day: July 6, 1404). See note 65 above.

³²⁴ Between Yongle 13, 12th month and Yongle 22, 3rd month, i.e., January 1416 to April 1424 no tributary mission was recorded in the *Ming Shilu*. See the table “Tribute missions from Lan Na (Babai-dadian) to Ming China (1388–1513)”.

Abbreviations

C.S.	Cūḷasakarāja ("Little Era" = Christian Era minus 638)
CMC	Chiang Mai Chronicle
CSC	Chiang Saen Chronicle
CTC	Chiang Tung Chronicle
HP	Hans Penth version
HSH	Hò samut haengchat (National Library)
JSC	Jengtung State Chronicle
JKM	Jinakālamālipakaraṇam
LP	Luang Prasoet
N	Notton version
NC	Nan Chronicle
PLN	Prawattisat lan na
PMCT	Phongsawadan Müang Chiang Tung
PMN	Phongsawadan müang nan
PPKSA	Phra-ratcha phongsawadan krung si ayutthaya
PC	Phayao Chronicle
PSC	Prachum silacarük
PY	Phongsawadan yonok
SN	Samnak nayok rathamontri version
SRI	Social Research Institute
TMP	Tamnan müang phayao
TMSC	Tamnan müang chiang saen
TMY	Tamnan müang yòng
TPCM	Tamnan phün müang chiang mai
tr.	transcription (from Northern Thai to Siamese script)
TSKD-TSI	Tamnan suwanna kham daeng rü Tamnan sao inthakhin
TSHR	Tamnan sip ha ratchawong
W	Wyatt (translation of PMN)
WSKK	Wat Si Khom Kham version
WSBR	Wat Si Bun Rüang version

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