CHAPTER - IV

THE TAI STATE FORMATION
The Tai developed their administrative apparatus when they were in their own homeland muang country. A number of family formed a village or ban. Out of different bans a muang or city state evolved. For military expansion, an expedition was usually sent under the command of the sons of the chief. Thus, a Tai prince was accompanied by a band of warriors and their families. After they conquered a certain rivals they would colonize and settled as organized communities governed by a prince.\(^1\) The local population was asked to recognize him as the overlord.\(^2\)

The upland low-lying Tai agriculturists migrated in large number in the northern fringe of the Khmer Empire during the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. They succeeded in setting up respective small principalities like Lannatai, Cheing Saen, Ngoengang, Payao, Lao, Sanyang and Luang Prabang.\(^3\) Many years before they arrived at the northern fringe of the Chao Phaya Valley and even during these eleventh and twelfth centuries, the powerful classical Indianized empires like Angkor and Pegun were quite strong over the Chao Phraya and Irrawaddy valleys respectively.\(^4\) During this period, the Tai Chiefs or rulers established their individual principalities, though they failed to aggregate into an independent centralized kingdom.
However, the whole atmosphere was dramatically changed with the advent of 13th century A.D. A joint force of prince Khun Bang Klang Tao of Bang Yang and Khun Pa Kuang of Kad (both were the Khmer vassalages) invaded and defeated the Khmer commander at Sukhothai. The first Tai kingdom of Sukhothai was established under the kingship of King Sri Indaratit. Thus, the first Tai state originated out of purely conquest and then its maturation was made by other contemporary social circumstances i.e. warfare, religious work, trade, water work, trade and tribute and plunder. It is a classic example of a secondary state formation.

Barbara J. Price mentions that "Secondary states are formed as a result of the expansion of other states themselves either primary or secondary". The conflict school of sociologists like Ludwing Gumplowick, Franz Oppenheimer, Albion Small and Lester Ward believe that "the state originated as a result of conquest that permanently subjugated the losers with military use of organised force thus adapted to peace time". Fried also holds that "just as stratified society grew out of antecedent forms of society without the conscious awareness of the culture carries, so it would seem that the state emerged from the stratified society in a similar inexorable way. He further pleads that if this hypothesis is correct, conquest theory can be accepted only a
special case of secondary state formation." Herbert Spencer emphasizes that "the successful waging of war develops the co-operation among the members of society and leads to learn subjugation to imperative command. He further assures that frequent and successful warfare leads to develop permanent chiefship". Otterbein observes that "successful warfare needs high degrees of subordination".

The small Sukhothai paternal state was faced with many rivalries. In order to make Sukhothai survive, King Sri Indratit embarked on a defensive warfare. The kingdom did not receive continuous threat from Angkor but it was not freed from their neighbour, the prince of Chot. Sri Indratit recruited large army from the new reinforced forces, he strengthened his army. With the help of his second son prince Ramkamhaeng, he defeated Prince of Chot. During the reign of Ramkamhaeng, the geographical frontier of Sukhothai was sufficiently expanded by conquering new cities and districts.

The kingdom's population was divided into two like Chao and commoners. During the outbreak of war, all commoners were mobilised as soldiers but in the time of peace they were brought to the public welfare work. Wuaritch males states that in the early stage, people were primarily organized
The organization work had been successfully done by the king alone and such organization resulted in developing centralization apparatus. King Sri Intratit's successful establishment of Sukhothai kingdom by waging war against Khmer empire caused to create a profound impression among the Tai people. And king Ramkamhoeng's extraordinary heroism gained massive loyalty of subject. But the Sukhothai kingdom was still left on the way of a mature stage, because their main task of the organization of manpower could not be carried out effectively. Akim Kabibhadana explains the failure to install a feasible state in Sukhothai region that the kingdom faced a great problem of control over manpower due to under-population and the continuous warfare which exhausted manpower. According to D.K. Ayatt, "during the reign of Ramkamhoeng the Great, there was not found centralized all power whether political or economic or cultural under a single king and he further asserts that there was no difference between Sukhothai and major outlying vassals."

In the 14th century the Tai power shifted from the northern fringe region to the middle of Chao Phraya Valley. The emergence of new Tai power under king Ramatibodi I created Sukhothai a vassal state of Ayudhya. The newly established Ayudhya was not free from any external challenge. War was a
vital factor to be a viable mature Tai state. His warfare against Cambodia was a fruitful one because a large number of captives, the source of manpower were brought from Cambodia and they were settled in Ayudhya. His successors also waged war against the neighbouring powers in order to install a powerful centralized state. Being won over the kingdom of Chiangmai, King Ramesuan brought back a considerable numbers of people to Ayudhya. After defeating the Cambodians by King Boromaraja II, large number of captives were carried back to Ayudhia. The successive carrying of vast number of captives from the subdued territories increased the population which was the back-bone of a state. The demographic increase met requirement of the manpower of the state.

In the early period at Ayudhya, there was a considerable transformation in the state system. The introduction of the appointment of territorial officers during the reign of Rama I witnessed the effectiveness of the organization of the manpower. The king could acquire manpower at any time. L.K. Hyatt states that "the extending of bureaucratic control over manpower in Ayudhya and the surrounding territories immediately dependent on the capital from the last half of the 14th century was an important new source of strength that gave Ayudhya an advantage over its neighbours". The paternalistic nature of Sukhothai State was no longer considered
during this time. Even though the early Ayudhians also experienced lack of smooth administration in the provinces and the shortage of administrative departments. It is doubtless to note that when King Boromtrailokanat or Trilok reorganized the kingdom’s administration, the Tai state of Ayudhaya got its maturation as the state was organized absolutely in hierarchic functional structure; different sufficient administrative institutional organs emerged and the whole population was involved in state administration by introducing Sakkina grade.

**RELIGIOUS WORK**

The Sukhothai Kingdom characteristically was described as a paternal form of government. In the paternalistic Sukhothai government, the king designated himself not only as the head of the government but also acted as a head priest. Since the early Taiz of Sukhothai were animists, they worshipped mysterious natural objects like large tree or mountain having its guardian spirit, dryad, or goblin. The king was responsible for the welfare of his subjects and to protect his subjects against witches, diseases etc. The king was admired by his subjects due to the possession of supernatural power. In such way, the king was able to acquire moral support from his subjects. It is recorded in the famous inscription of king
Ramkamhaeng, es follows:

"In yonder mountain is a demon-spirit, Brana Khabun, that is greater than every other spirit in this realm. If any prince ruling this realm of Sukhodaya reverence him well with proper offerings, this realm stands firm, this realm prospers. If the spirit be not referenced well, if the offering be not right, the spirit in the mountain does not protect, does not regard; this realm perishes".

Ramkamhaeng himself distinguished by propitiating the guardian spirit of the kingdom i.e. Brana Khabun.¹⁹

Of course, the Siamese were no longer animist, since Ramkamhaeng introduced Sri Lankan Buddhism in Siam. Soon it became a state religion. After this, close connection developed between the royal house and holy Shangha.²⁰ Being a devout Buddhist, he took a great care to promote the cause of religion and supported the monkhood. Ramkamhaeng ensured justice and prosperity to his subjects. At the same time, peoples were enjoined to observe the simple Buddhist precepts, to make merit, give alms and to present sermon regularly.²¹ According to ...
that the state was Buddhist but the religion was also political, certainly to the extent and political unity and identity were founded upon a religious basis. The King's success to persuade his subject to convert to Buddhism and the people's positive response signified King's ability to organize manpower through religious institution.

According to Ronald Cohen "the state develops a theology to support its authority system giving it a legitimacy that is omnipotent and supernatural". During the reign of Lithai, a custom of monkhood was introduced. Under this custom, Tai young men aged twenty-one should enter the monkhood for at least a short period in their lives. King Lithai entered monkhood for a short period of 4 (four) months. Thus, he himself set an example to his people. King Lithai built monasteries and he paid deep attention to make both small and large Buddhist images which were imbued with magical potency by special rites. By portraying as wise, pious and all knowing monarch and by describing King himself as the father of his people, he also sponsored the Sangha. As an ideal king he initiated public rites and ritual to unite both ruler and subjects in a common act of veneration. The nationwide Buddhist worship also provided a basis of a common ritual which in order to root out regional differences and thus accuratly bind the people together under a single monarch.
Undoubtedly, Tai Buddhism became a vital factor in the integration of the Tai state. Traditionally, the legitimation of political power of a Tai was to support the Buddhist Sangha. Most of the great Tai ruler paid great attention to build monastic establishments and even they made statues of Buddha. It was a duty to encourage high moral and religious standard among the monk. By these way, Tai kings were able to earn loyalty and honour from his subjects who were the ardent followers of the Buddhism.²⁵

King Ramatibodi I constructed several Buddhist monasteries which helped to organise manpower and to preach Buddhism in Thailand. King Trailok also constructed monasteries and viharas. For the period of 8 months, King himself adopted monastichood which was considered the possession of supernatural religious power. At the presence of the members of the Sangha under the presidentship of venerable Mahasmi Sangharaja, King was ordained. He was to adorn the statues of Buddhissattva's 500 incarnations. Even he dedicated his own palace to the Buddhist Sangha. Such activities exemplified the king himself as an ardent and well nourser of the Buddhist religion and his closeness with the Sangha. As the Tai were Buddhist, they had an admiration for and loyalty to the king's religious activities. It is said that some 2,368 Tai men were ordained.
during the reign of Trailok which showed the ability of the king to accumulate legitimacy of manpower through the Buddhism. Thus, the rites, ceremonies, precepts, belief, practice and monastery of fairs of Buddhism were socially integrating and stabilizing forces. The use of corvee labour in the building of monasteries or temples showed the Tai King's ability of the organization of manpower.

The traditional Sangha is an effective device to gain the legitimacy of royal power because it was the single most honoured group within the Tai society. It is highly essential to have a harmonious and co-operative relationship between the Sangha and the government to nourish long-term political success. Without unanimous or near unanimous support and endorsement of the Sangha, any Tai ruler or leader was impossible to hope his legitimate political position and power. One of the best example is king Taksin's clash with the Sangha. Such happenings created a bad impression on many Tai people and people thought it as a blunder act of the king against the Buddhism. His misbehaviour resulted in a negative political repercussion. Therefore, in 1782 king Taksin was forcibly deposed.

King Rama I, in order to reorganize Buddhism, took several major steps. For this purpose he issued several royal
edicts or decrees to regain popular honour of Tai Sangha by promoting moral and behaviour of the monks. Rama I's effort of reinstatement of Sangha order contributed to his legitimacy as a ruler. Other programmes comprised of the construction of large number of monasteries in the capital, his convenorship of the Ninth Buddhist Council and the maintenance of education of thousands of monks, injected to normalise the relation between the king and the Sangha. The sociological significance is that with his strong support for the religious cause, the king acquired legitimacy of power from his subjects. No doubt, his efforts were successful to achieve the political legitimacy for himself and his descendants. That is why, the throne was handed peacefully and orderly over to his son. Like his father, Rama II gained maximum loyalty from his subjects by initiating the construction of monasteries and showing their pious support to Buddhism. King Mongkut also adopted monkhood at the age of 20 (twenty). As a pious Buddhist king, he also utilized the state funds for the construction of monasteries and restoration of several monasteries and the huge Chedi at Pra Falloom which created a great impression in the mind of the people. And its result was the people's support to the king. Like his father, Chulalongkorn also entered the monkhood and he took up several major steps to popularise Buddhist religion. The successful religious works like establishment of Buddhist monasteries, pious acts in connection
With the religion, upliftment created warm relation between the Chakri kings and Sangha orders etc. attributed firm political position of the Chakri dynasty. However, in order to build temples or monasteries and palaces, the Tai kings organized manpower i.e. corvee labour or Phrai. The use of corvee labour in the building of monasteries or temples and places showed the Tai kings' ability of the organization of human labour.

In fact a king, aiming for a fruitful political career i.e. his project of the establishment of a successful state and the stable government would have required his pious moral, welfare work of the Buddhism and the warm relation with the Sangha to strengthen his power to be a master of the state. The support of the Sangha represented the support of the people which was the source of the legitimacy of royal power.

\textbf{WATER WORK}

Traditionally, the Tai were wet rice agriculturists. According to the geographical variation and with the development and expansion of the Tai world, they performed swidden or upland dry-rice cultivation, low land wet-rice cultivation with broadcasting and transplantation.\textsuperscript{34}
The Taiis performed swidden cultivation when they were in their homeland region and in the northern fringe of Angkor Empire. With the commencement of their second civilization in the northern part of the Chao Phraya valley particularly in Sukhothai region, they developed the system of lowland wet-rice cultivation. However, the full-swing expansion of Tai civilization probably followed the wet-rice cultivation by transplantation. After the foundation of first Tai Kingdom of Sukhothai by conquest, they key factor of state development was the stability of population created by successful agriculture operated with the help of irrigation and other work.

The magnificent success of the Tai's installation of a state in Sukhothai was the unquestionable example of the possession of population, territory, government, ruler etc. Thus, the Tai ruler of Sukhothai in order to gain legitimacy of power and the centralization of power, required to control population by means of increasing surplus production in society. It resulted in developing material foundation society characterized by classes and caste.

1. Hunt believes that "there is a clear relation between water control and the source of power of the ruling elites of the irrigated society. But it is essential to remain
that there are many varieties of society practising irrigation and many forms of irrigation that either in large scale or small scale. On the other hand, the elite bureaucracy also undertook other massive water works by repairing and digging canals. Considerably, the ruling bureaucracy builds (navigation canal and irrigation canals) and reinforces its power because it can effectively carry out the functions and roles required to be managed by the masses.  

It is recorded in the stone inscription of Sukhothai that "irrigation was practised in this period. It further recorded that the king constructed an irrigation canal from Lon Ove all the way to Sukhothai. It provided water both to upland and lowland farms and people planted area palms and caught fish. The Sukhothai population was divided into two classes i.e., Chao or ruling class headed by the king and the commoners. The commoners were the source of manpower. The people were to render the compulsory state services and they were to serve as an army during the wartime. And they were obliged to work for the state during the time of peace.

The establishment of powerful Tai kingdom over the central plan of the Chao Praya plain brought tremendous
advantages in the field of agriculture. It is recorded in
the Annals of Ayudhya (particularly the period of Ramati-
bodi II) that in 1498 A.D., two ancient canals were repaired
by deepening and clearing. It also mentions that in 1510 A.D.
restoration of irrigation of an irrigation canal among other
royal works was carried out. Thus the Ayuthian kings carried
out irrigation work by improving existing ones. 38

In many sphere, Ayudhya was more advanced than Sukho-
thai. While the Ayudhya is situated on three rivers coverage
of rich alluvial valley, Sukhothai stands along the shore of
a smaller river. 39 However, the Tais became an abundant rice
producer by performing wet rice cultivation with the help of
monsoon rain which was brought to field through irrigation
canals and inundation of river water feed by rain. Popula-
tion came to spring up by attracting immigrants and war cap-
tives brought by the Ayudhian rulers. Therefore, large cul-
tivable areas were reclaimed.

The establishment of Tai capital in Bangkok followed
the expansion of habitat, the further encouragement of the
reclamation of cultivable areas and the introduction of plan-
tation agriculture. However, large scale plantation agricul-
ture began smoothly with the help of canal water and largely
with the assistance of the river as well as rain water. Hence,
sufficient amount of agricultural yield was furtherly reported. It shows the expansion of cultivable areas over the Chao Phraya valley and production increased. During the reign of Narai the great, the permission was given to export rice. 40

James C. Ingram estimates that in 1850, the population was almost wholly engaged in agriculture and rice was the principal crop. It was successfully cultivated over the Chao Phraya river valleys which were flooded each year with a fair degree of regularity. Thus, the rice production was enough to feed the people and after keeping for their annual consumption, rice was exported to solve the problem of failure of a rice crop in southern China. 41 Such increase in production proved that the Thai society was no more stagnated as Karl Marx states in his Asiatic Mode of Production that Asiatic society is prologue stagnate.

According to Suwititch Wares during this Bangkok period, tens of thousands of acres of unproductive land were brought under cultivation with the help of irrigation. 42 Dramatic development of agriculture took place during the reign of Chulalongkorn by minimizing or suspending the tax on rice field and implementing the irrigation projects, he promoted
the extension of rice cultivation. 

In a paper entitled "An Ecological Interpretation of Thai History", Yoshikazu Takaya analyses the development and expansion of agricultural areas which was a factor to transform the Tai society in many ways. His elaborate discussion is briefly studied in order to fulfill the subject of argument (i.e. that Tai society was no more stagnated).

"The first independent Sukhothai kingdom located on a mountain-embraced fan at the edge of the central plain of the Chao Praya. The kingdom enjoyed the apex of the distributary system of the intermountain basin. Probably here was treated as a central rice growing area of distributary system. On the other hand, such apex area became a focal point of the centralization of power. In the distributary system, a complex system of relation between the farmers of apex areas and the farmers of distributary areas came to exist. The apex farmer monopolised the water by building dams and canals. Their main occupation was wet rice cultivation by broadcast. The shifting of the Tai centre from Sukhothai to Ayudhya facilitated the Tai to enjoy a vast cultivable flood plain of the Chao Praya river which is one to two hundred kilometres wide and about four hundred kilometres long. By and large, the Taes performed wet rice cultivation successfully over the vast area. The expansion of unprecedented cultivable
area pushed up the annual yield several times than before. The Tai society in Ayudhya period apparently happened to develop and transform in many ways. The complex system of social relation between the producers and consumers came to emerge. Ayudhya's location on the bank of the Chao Praya river witnessed the centre of commercial port. The establishment of the Tai's capital at Bangkok on the strategic delta region of the Chao Praya river further expanded the reclamation of agricultural areas. The plantation agriculture, which enabled an increased production, was introduced in this delta region. However, its trade also reached maturity by improving the old canals and digging the new ones. The Tai was considerably found changing and developing in every stage of their shifting centre.⁴⁴

According to E. Elliot, in central Thailand rice cultivation was successfully practised with the help of irrigation, rain water and inundation water of the river. Most water managerial and irrigation works in Chao Praya valley were done by social labour power (corvee labour) in the form of public works projects and the major canal networks and dams were constructed and managed by gangs of workers. In the northern part, there was upland soil condition—minimum alluvium. The essential water of transplantation of rice cultivation was sufficiently provided by rainfall and numerous
streams. He further states that nearly all irrigation work or means i.e. wires, dikes and small canals, were very simple and managed by the immediate users. However, the elite bureaucracy seems to have inactive to evolve the construction of irrigation projects and water managerial works but most of these works seem to be in the hands of the users or perhaps of community in some instances. The north-east region received scanty rainfall, therefore, upland methods of rice cultivation were performed there. The transplantation of rice cultivation concentrated in small area having enough water to irrigate the fields. In the south some upland form of rice cultivation was performed. 45

It can be concluded that as a whole it will not be appropriate to study the pre-capitalist Tai economy within the framework of Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production. Undoubtedly, the pre-capitalist Tai social economic system had no exact counterpart in Marxian economy of Asiatic Mode of Production (AMFP). Therefore, the Marxian Oriental or Asiatic Despotism discussed in his Asiatic Mode of Production was unsuitable to Tai society; because the specific feature of Marx's Asiatic Despotism differed from the Tai despotism. 46

Marx emphasizes that irrigation was only one of the
key aspects of the emergence of Asiatic despotism. His emphasis is that the arid land of Asia could not be brought under cultivation in a large enough scale without artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks. The village community separately or in association could not undertake large scale irrigation because of the vastness of territories and low level of civilization. But such work was carried out successfully by the government and it leads to the existence of the powerful and centralized Asiatic despotism whereas in Thailand there is a plenty of vast cultivable river plain. Cultivation was widely practised throughout the country successfully by monsoon water and some part of the central plains cultivation was done with the help of irrigation sponsored by the government. In Thailand, the centralization political apparatus was brought by both irrigation and navigational canal work leads to the rise of despotism. The features of Asiatic despotism are to be found more typically in Asia (1) the political state of the people does not exist, it is nothing but the private caprice of a single individual, (2) the king was the proprietor of land and there was not any intermediary class like feudal state or class check him, (3) slaves or slave owners did not exist in Asian society, all were general slaves below the despot. The Siamese kings
were not only initiation in the construction programme of irrigation canal projects but they were highly conscious of the other water work programmes like the establishment of navigational canals and digging wells to solve drinking water problem. King Naratibodi I dug wells to solve the scarcity of drinking water. By digging new canals such as the Limarong and the Tubnang canals and improvement of the existing ones, King Boromtrailokanat facilitated internal water transport. During the raja's reign a new canal from Bankok Nyai was dug out in order to shorten the distance from the sea to Ayudhya. King Taisra, by conscription of thirty thousand workers completed the digging of the Mahajai canal. Lawad canal was also constructed during the reign of Taksin. King Ram I initiated to dig a new canal to shorten the river transport.

During the reign of Rama III (1824-1850), at least four waterway projects were completed including a canal thirty three miles long, built in two years. King Mongkut constructed new canals to provide facility of the communication system between the capital and its adjoining towns. Large canal projects were undertaken by irrigation departments at the time of Chulalongkorn. Thus, by the end of 19th century, there were several thousand kilometres of waterways.
The sociological significance of digging of wells, repairing or improving old ones and digging new canals particularly for the purposes of drinking water and communication were to control manpower which legitimised central political power. The utilitarian work of waterways stimulated the flow of wealth into the royal treasury. None could gather manpower except the king because the control of such projects required capital and effective management power to generate the labours. In the context of Siam, only the ruling elites were able to carry out such programme. In exchange of their manual work, they would get royal protection and perhaps other benefits also. The corvee labour or commoners were compulsory obliged to render royal command in such public works. To a greater extent, under his own powers, the king got enormous success to organise manpower effected to state apparatus.

**TRADE**

Trade is also considered a vital factor for the foundation of the Tai state. Since the Tai state was a secondary state, the role of trade in the establishment of Tai state apparently differed from the trade's role in a primary state. The most common form of early Sukhothian trade was the simple barter of product between communities and the villagers within the communities. The Tai kings of Sukhothai were involved
both in international and national trade in order to accumulate wealth. For the betterment of Tai trade King Ramkamhaeng, the Great, encouraged free trade. During his time, the Sungkha-long wares were exported as far as the Philippines, Java, Sumatra, Pegu and India. Besides this, onwards the thirteenth century, China trade was fairly conducted by junks. Annually, a Chinese junk brought cargoes of manufactured goods from the ports of China and after arriving at the Menam, it was converted into a floating market. From the early time, the Siamese had commercial relation with the Indians. The important imported Chinese goods were silk, cotton cloth, tobacco, tea, refined sugar, crockery etc. In fact, most of the export items went from Siam to China. Till the 15th century, the Chinese monopoly of export-import trade were very active. Not only the Chinese distributed those imported goods but the king also gave these to his subjects as gifts and remuneration for their services. In exchange of it the king gained loyalty.

From their work of rice cultivation, the Siamese peasants were involved in trade activity. Considerably the important national trade items were such peasant necessities as salt, metal products etc. The Tai king could control the teak trade as the logs were floated down in the Chao Phraya river. It was done from the earliest time and continued many
years. The internal trade was usually handled by itinerant caravans in the outlying regions and directly by various consumers and producers in the area surrounding the capital.\textsuperscript{53} Since the Tais were the self-sufficiency food producer, both internal and international trades were the device to supplement their requirement and to earn more wealth which enabled the state to control manpower.

In the sphere of trade, there was a great development in the later part of 15th century A.D., particularly during the kingship of Trailok. At that time Ayudhya was a major supplier of rice to Malacca, at the same time both luxury goods and Indian cotton cloth were imported from Malacca to Ayudhya. The control of Tavoy and Tenasserim brought direct access to the international trade of the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean.

D.K. Hyatt remarks that "during this period king had monopolistic control over the international trade throughout Asia. It was customary that the visiting traders were not allowed to sell goods before the king purchased what he required at his own price and none could buy staple commercial commodities until the King's supply, usually collected from his subjects in kind in place of taxes was exhausted at the king's asking price. He further states that such arrangement caused to make strengthen the crown as well as ruling elite".\textsuperscript{54}
With the advent of the 16th century, a new chapter in the field of trade was opened. The first European i.e. Portuguese trade relation was established during the reign of Ramathibodi II. Their important success during this time was to set up new trade relation with the Muslim states. They mainly brought fire-arms and ammunition from the Portuguese. 55

During the reign of Phra Thotsarot, state revenue increased praiseworthily by introducing new taxes imposed on markets, shops, ship's measurement, ten percent tax on goods and permitted the payment due in cash in lieu of manual labour. 56 There was found a great expansion of foreign trade when Tai entered into the trade with the Japanese and the Dutch. 57 His economic construction programmes through the introduction of need tax system and the expansion of foreign trade increased crown's wealth and helped to enhance king's ability to launch many welfare programmes for his subjects.

The first royal trade monopoly was introduced during the reign of king Songtam. 58 The main purposes of the imposition of royal trade monopoly were to conserve the natural resources and to control foreign trade at a close range. The people were not permitted to deal with the foreign merchants in some specific commodities like ivory, hides and sandalwood.
If any foreign merchants were willing to purchase, they should buy from Royal Warehouse Department. King Songtam renewed both Dutch and English commercial relations. Trade with the France was also opened to play them against the Dutch. During the period of King Prajadhipo, the price of export goods were increased which enabled to thrive up royal exchanges. By using the powerful European powers, King Narai competently maintained balanced trade which was an instrumental device to save the nation's wealth. But the trade with Spanish did not make any gain for the Tai's.

However, the Tai trade relation with the west collapsed for many years after the fall of Ayudhya for the second time. During the period of Rama III, Siam's foreign trade with the British territories increased under the Burney treaty in 1826. The royal monopoly on certain goods still continued. Tai-American trade was also flourished in his time.

Most of the commercial treaties throughout the reign of Bangkok period was political in nature. There were found considerable sacrifices of the Siamese in each and every commercial agreements with the west during the Bangkok period but such treaties helped to acquire political security.

The introduction of the government's trade in Siam in
the 17th century witnessed to earn more profits. Probably the profits derived from various export and import goods monopolized by the government. Besides, the government received profits from the proceeds of expeditions run by the royal ships to the ports and gained profits from the sale of a portion of the products of the royal possessions.

Tai kings' active involvement both in external and internal and their monopoly in certain import and export goods increased the state's wealth and enabled the states to conduct various administrative branches. Thus, in a considerable way, Siamese trade appeared as a useful fruit to the Tai state foundation and it played a major role in its maturation into a full fledged secondary state.

TRIBUTE AND PLUNDER

The essentiality of tribute and plunder in Tai secondary state was not more than the collection or accumulation of wealth which was the basis of state expenditure. The wealth of the Tai state was derived from many sources. The wealth collected by plundering specially from the conquered territories and collecting tribute mainly for the vassal states became a characteristic feature of the Tai state (Sukhothai and
and Ayudhya periods) David Elliot thinks that tribute and plunder also played responsible role in the foundation of Tai state.

It is reported for the first time that during the reign of Ramkamhaeng, vassal states or cities like Nan, Luwang Prabang, Weingchan, Wiengkham, Tavoy and Nakhon Si Thammarat sent tribute periodically to Sukhothai. Besides this, these vassal kings were to send their men in the form of another kind of tribute during the outbreak of war. The Siamese kings enjoyed the tribute submitted by the vassal states of the North and the Malay States of Peninsula. It continued until these state were absorbed in the Siamese kingdom at the time of King Rama V. Most of time Siamese kings used to plunder wealth from the vanquished kingdoms. Tai kings plundered teak in the form of expropriation to the territory of Chao Phraya valley, while the Tai king plundered products from the southern area, along the Malay peninsula, sea and small islands in Gulf of Siam for the consumption of the ruling class but mainly for export to China. Bats' excrement used in making gunpowder and tin provided a source of wealth to the ruling class, came from the south.

As a matter of fact, successful wealth accumulation of the Siamese King was a source of power to control his
subjects. The possession of huge amount of wealth enabled him to meet the expenses of his centralization programme. Thus, the Siamese kings gained legitimacy of power through programme of the accumulation of wealth. Tribute and plunder, one of a means of wealth accumulation used by the Siamese, had also been rightly considered as a favourable factor necessitated by either financial system of the kingdom or power hungry ruling elite or monarchy.

THE TAI-AHOM STATE FORMATION

Historical events indicate that the Tai-Ahom State was secondary in nature. Number of the scholars prove the evidence by analysing the historical trend and contemporary development of socio-economic and political institutions. Scholars like Amalendu Guha, R.Buragohain and J.B.Bhattarjee study very systematically the factors of Tai-Ahom state formation in their own different respective way with the Marxian and non-Marxian conceptual frame and methodology.

Hso-Ka-Hpa established the secondary Tai-Ahom kingdom of Assam in 1228 by conquest.66 The kingdom was expanded and made a full-fledged state by subjugation and absorption of the neighbouring indigenous people. The emergence of feudal system
with more social strata extension of wet-rice cultivation in the occupied areas and adoption of Shakta Hinduism led to the centralization of power in the hand of the king.

Amalendu Guha makes a detail survey of the Tai-Ahom political development and the practice of wet-rice cultivation backed by the irrigation. He states that "surely the Ahom political system was not a wholesale importation nor was it entirely an autonomous growth in Assam. It did have certain pre-Ahom elements". 67 K.N. Fried's argument is very relevant to the formation of Tai-Ahom state developed by A. Guha. His argument is that "the society leading to the state formation is superstratified society that means both the vanquished and conqueror have been internally stratified already". 68 No doubt the Ahoms inherited certain readymade social-political elements from the vanquished indigenous kingdom. The early phase of the Tai-Ahom state formation was coined as Tribalism by Guha. The further conquest launched by the Ahom kings attributed to feudalize the Ahom state.

When he studies the secondary Tai-Ahom state, Guha mainly emphasizes on its socio-political evolution of them. According to him, "the rudimentary Ahom state based on many agricultural village (ban) settlement, each made up of a
a certain number of big or small families belonging to dif-
ferent family groups (fold). Number of such settlements
combined together and formed an intermediate units or do-
main with one of the village settlements as the headquarters
of the noblemen governing it. At the apex of the several do-
 mains, there was a king including his collegiate like nobles
and officers appointed by him. 69

Guha also highlights the transformation of economic
structure with the establishment of the Tai-Ahom state. They
introduced sali (wet-rice cultivation) cultivation to the
subdued Morans and Boharis tribes who produced chu rice with
slash and burn methods. However, an extensive area was bro-
ught under sali cultivation which is high yeild crop. This
enabled them to possess surplus production helped largely to
develop the kingdom in fullswing. He also, thus, states that
"statehood emerges only when a community produces a surplus
sufficient for the maintenance of a non-producing public
authority". 70 In such way, the Tai-Ahoms certainly became
superior to those neighbour kingdoms like Kacharies and Chur-
tias. He points out that Ahom king's attention to build up
large-scale embankments serve as bund to restrict the heavy
inundation and it was also used as road. Such programme of
construction provided great advantage to carry out successfully
wet-rice culture in Upper Assam.\textsuperscript{71} For heavy construction work of embankment required large number of workers. In this respect, king could organize manpower by financing and thus centralize his power and made it effective in state apparatus.

He observes that "Ahom state was a quasi-feudal state". However, by the 16th century, there was a remarkable development of Ahom state because the Chutia kingdom was annexed and its population was also absorbed and Kachari power was crushed. The expansion of territory followed the increase of population and the extension of cultivable land area led to rapid increase of surplus yield. Such consequent dynamic changes brought to make Ahom state as a largely material base society. It shows the development of Ahom state towards the feudal state. The state became a real feudal state in 17th century with the process of the neo-Vaisnavite movement and the introduction of Hindu myth in the concept of Tai-Ahom kingship.\textsuperscript{72}

K. Buragohain believes that conquest was the basic factor for the emergence of Tai-Ahom secondary state. He not only makes an extensive study of theoretical works but also makes a survey of the historical events of the Tai-Ahoms. His study clearly shows that conquest and warfare became
unique feature of the newly established kingdom. The policy of conquest and warfare enabled this kingdom to survive and even it was an important means to become a full-fledged state. He strongly pleads that 'the Tai-Ahom state became a really mature, when the kingdom of the Chutia was not only annexed but also its population was also absorbed and the power of the Cacharies was crushed by king Hso-Hum-Kong. 73

Buragohain exactly applies Karl Wittgogel's idea of hydraulic society to the Tai-Ahom society. He pleads that "ecologically the Tai-Ahom state had to be a hydraulic state". The Ahom kings took a great initiation to construct embankments and dykes to restrict from the heavy inundation of the perennial Brahmaputra and its tributaries. For such constructions the king organized manpower. His organization programme of manpower strengthened the king's centralization power effected to the development of state. On the other hand, the dykes and embankments were used as irrigational canal for sali paddy cultivation provided the infrastructure the society which is highly co-related to the state apparatus. 'These developments gave to rise to gyro-managerial despotism'. 74

R. Buragohain refers to the role of myth in the Tai-Ahom state formation. The claim of the descent from heavenly
god Lengdon caused the sacred divine status in Tai-shom king. And by performing the Rikkhan and Ne-Bam He-Phi ceremonies the king effected to social control for solidarity, vitality and life force in the nation. The shom kings then established legitimacy of their right over the throne. The facts are that "during the interregnum periods of 18 years (1364-1368, 1376-1379, and 1383-1388). The kingdom was governed with symbolic kong, the vacant throne by the nobility and secondly, during the period of the weaker rulers (1676-1681) when Atan Buraço(hain, the Prime Minister thrice refused the crown on the ground that he did not belong to a royal family." These happenings show that the shom kingship was highly correlated to the mythical concept. He further asserts that the role of the Brahmanical influence on the Tai-shom state formation and its development. The Brahmanical influence began to penetrate into Tai-shom state during the reign of Juddangpha(1397-1407). It coincided with the introduction of coins in the history of shom. This not only brought social development by possessing hard money economy but also changed the status of political authority. King Ahhumung-bhiingga's adoption of Hindu title of Swargaranarayana (god of heaven) caused to identify the king with Indra, Lord of heaven. This was the beginning to graft the Hindu myths on shom legend. The imported Hindu divine theory of kingship played a major role in the succession of shom throne. It
strengthened legitimacy of kings right over the throne which acquired loyalty from the subjects.76

Gradually ancestral mythical Ahomization process was substituted by Hinduized mythical process. For the first time, the Ahom king Subhada Jayadwaj Sinha (1646-1683) officially embraced the Hinduism which resulted in transforming the socio-political aspects. The intensive Hinduization process contributed the stability of the kingdom by converting both Ahoms and tribal people to the Hinduism. Politically it was an integrated process, attributed by the Ahom kings through Brahmanical myths.77

Bhattacharyja observes the importance of the stratification factor in Tai-Ahom state formation. He points out that "the state was organized on an absolutely hierarchical order and influenced by the stratification the seeds for which were embedded in the early Ahom social organization. The hierarchical order of the Tai-Ahom polity was clearly identified even at its initial stage. Sukapha the first Tai-Ahom king belonged to celestial clan. His two councillors Barhashaine and Buraghain also belonged to the special clans. Besides these, there were also three priestly lineages like Haikung, Leorhai and Mohen." These were the fundamental bases for the
development of Ahom political organization. On the other hand, with the further conquest, and the process of Ahomization (meaning the absorption of members of ethnic tribal groups), the number of the clan groups came to increase. He agrees with A. Guha that the ministers including both "the military and civil administration was vested in a gradation of officers down the chain of hierarchy."

The civil administrators were graded like Phukan/
Bar Phukan, Barua/Bar-Barua, Bora/Bar Bora etc. The military cum-civil officers, who were vested with the command of certain number of men (khel), were also explicitly graded. A Phukan was given the right to command of 600, a Nazarika of 1000, a Saikia of 100, and a Bora of 20. This gradation was linked with the paik system. The paiks were organized into khels'. Even the paik was divided into Chauma paiks (soldier-archer) and Kanri paiks (civil workers). The paik system was not only considered as an important leading factor for the growth of the Ahom polity pyramidal in form but also became the backbone of the whole Ahom structural growth which gave birth to highly stratification society. 


32. N. Smith, A Physician At the Court of Siam, London, 1947, p.87.
36. D. Elliot, op.cit., p.36.
39. D. Elliot, op.cit., p.34.
40. R. Syamananda, op.cit., p.72.
42. Waaritch Wales, op.cit., p.230.
43. R. Syamananda, op.cit., p.130.
46. Bipan Chandra, Karl Marx, His Theories of Asian Societies and Colonial Rule, New Delhi, p.11.
47. Rong Syamananda, op.cit., p.41.
50. R. Syamananda, op.cit., p.46.
51. Ibid., pp.24 & 27.
52. Tuaritch Wales, op.cit., p.206.
58. Ibid., p.163.
64. Tuaritch Wales, op.cit., p.221.

69. Amlendu Guha, op. cit., p. 84.

70. Ibid., pp. 67, 70 & 71.

71. Ibid., p. 74.

72. Ibid., pp. 85, 89-90.

73. Golap Chandra Sarua, Ahom Buranji From the Earliest time to the end of Ahom Rule, 1985, pp. 61 & 66.


