CHAPTER I

The Tai: Their Origin and Branches

The 'Tai' is a generic name denoting a great branch of the Mongoloid people of Asia. The Tai are the dominant element among the population of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The present habitat of the Tai people extends from Assam in the west to Kwangsi and Hainan in the east and from the interior of Yun-nan in the north to the southernmost part of Thailand (Siam) in the south.

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

Only in southern and central Siam the aspirated form from 'Thai' ('free') is used. 'Chai', a variant of 'Tai', is prevalent among the Laos. The local peoples generally known as
the Tai, by their local names. The Assam branch of the Tai, for instance, that ruled for about six hundred years (A.D. 1228-1826) in the Brahmaputra Valley, is known by its local name Ahom. The other smaller groups of Tai people that came to Assam during a later period are known locally by their various local names, such as the Hkamti, the Dyake or Phakial as the Assamese call them, the Turong (or Tai-rung), the Sham, the Iton or Itonia, the Hkamyang and the Nora. But when asked for their racial identity they introduce themselves as Tai-Hkamti, Tai-Dyake, Tai-Turong and so on. Unlike the Hinduised Ahoms these later immigrants still preserve their racial habits and customs. They are to-day mostly scattered in the backward areas of Eastern Assam. They are all Buddhists.

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

The Tai are a very ancient race and like other such races their origin is shrouded in obscurity. All that is said

1 "such as Tai, Htai, Pai-i, Hoi, Muong, Tho or Do, Hkamti, with a very much greater number of local names, assumed by themselves or given by their neighbours, such as Lao, Law, Hkun, Lu, Tai-leng, Tai-noi, Tai-mao, Tai-no, Tai-man, Tai-hke, Tai-loi, Pu-ttsi, Pi-nong (or Nung), Pu-man, Pu-ju, Pu-chel, Pu-en, Pu-yel, Pu-sui, P'o Pa, Shui Han, or Hua Pai-i, Pai-jen, Yu-jen, Pu-man, Pai, Hei or Hua T'uo-lo, Hung or Lung-jen, Sha-jen, Hei or Pai Sha-jen, Hinchia, Shui-chia-chang-chia, and many more still more purely local." - George Scott and Hardiman: Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Part I - Vol. I, Rangoon, 1900, pp. 137-9.
about their origin and development in the early period by modern writers is largely based on legendary accounts contained in ancient books. Hence these writers, in attempting to construct an historical narrative of the early periods of this race out of the available data in fragments and fables, have had to resort to conjectures and interpretations on many points. One of the most eminent scholars in this field, Professor M. Terrien de Lacouperie, from his close study of the Chinese records, asserts that "the cradle of the Shan race was in the Hiulung mountains, north of Szechuen and south of Shensi, in China Proper."² Probably the progenitors of this race, being driven by the hardships of the semi-desert North in the regions about Mongolia, migrated to the south at an early period following the courses of the Yellow River. Dr. B. Laufer, Curator of Anthropology, Field Columbian Museum, Chicago, traces that "the early home of the peoples of eastern Asia was in the Upper reaches of the Hoang-ho or Yellow River of China, and that from this center the Tibetans migrated westward; the early tribes of Indo-China, southward; and the Chinese southeastward."³ According to Max Miller the original seat of the Tai or Siamese branch of the Indo-Chinese peoples, called Shan by the Burmese, was in Central Asia and it was from that area that these people were the first to migrate towards the south and settle among

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

It has been brought to our notice by recent researches that the Tai were ruling in Central and Eastern China with a comparatively advanced culture long before the formation of the so-called "Chinese race." In fact, the Chinese race is the product of a gradual process of amalgamation of many separate peoples belonging to different races including the Tai. But the real home of the Tai peoples, or rather the region where they developed as a distinct race, had been in South-west China whence, in course of time, under the pressure of the Chinese and the invading Mongol hordes they had to move in successive waves towards the south fanning out along the courses of the great rivers, the Irrawaddy, the Salween, the Henam, the Mekong and even the Brahmaputra consolidating their power over these areas. Thus sprang up, in course of time, numerous Tai States in the extensive river valleys of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, some acknowledging the nominal suzerainty of China, Burma or Cambodia, while others developing into independent kingdoms under their powerful potentates. Of the Tai

States of earlier periods, particularly those that flourished before the sixth century A.D., systematic history is no longer available; only the names of some are mentioned in the extant records with scanty details in the form of stories.

Explanations so far given by scholars about the origin of the racial name Tai, or Thai, as pronounced in southern and central Siam, are not conclusive. But the latter word 'Thai', used in the sense of 'free' or the free people, has a history of its own in the traditions of Thailand (Siam). It is said that in the seventh century A.D., a Tai prince, named Phra Ruang, was the ruler of Sangkalok (Svargalok), a principality of Zimme (Chiengmai). He was a tributary chief under Cambodia, which at that time was supreme in south Indo-China. In A.D. 638 this prince rebelled against the ruler of Zimme and seized that State overthrowing the suzerainty of Cambodia. He proclaimed himself sovereign of Zimme, liberated the people, and started the Siamese national era, which dates from A.D. 638. Bishop Pallegoiz is of the opinion that this took place "in the year 1000 of the era of Phra Khodom." Phra Ruang is mentioned in the Siamese Annals as a national hero of the Thai people. But the Phra Ruang Dynasty, so founded, did not last long. It was overthrown during his son's rule by the king of Kiang Tsen.

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6 Phra = the Buddha, Khodom = Gotama,
Cushing: Grammar of the Shan Language: Rangoon, 1887,
Introduction, P. 3.

7 Hilt S. Hallett: "Historical Sketch of the Shans" in Colquhoun’s Amongst the Shans, 1885, pp. 344-45.
This appears to be the earlier history of the Phra Ruang Dynasty. But the dynasty is said to have reappeared in the thirteenth century at Sukhodaya (Sukhot'ai) in the person of Sri Indraditya, who firmly established his dynasty in that State by ousting the Cambodians. Bishop Pallegoix says that after Phra Ruang had freed the country from the Khmers, 'the Sajam took the name of Thai, which signified "free"'. This explanation is generally accepted by other scholars who want to explain the origin of the term Thai. Phra Ruang, in this later period, seems to correspond to both Indraditya (ca. 1256-75) and his son, Rama Khamheng (ca. 1275-1317), but, as pointed out by Briggs, the name is sometimes applied to other kings of Siam. Phra Ruang was probably a patronymic title of the rulers of the dynasty. It is believed that in this case Rama Khamheng is certainly meant. If so, the date of the appearance of the form Thai or T'ai, in the written language, can be placed between A.D. 1292, when the form Dai appears in the inscription of this monarch, and A.D. 1317 the probable date of his death. In the context of the events of the earlier history of the Phra Ruang Dynasty the later use of the term Dai or Thai by Indraditya or Rama Khamheng may be called only as its revival or rather restoration, Sukhodaya was, until the time of its emergence as an independent Thai State, the northern capital of the Cambodian Empire. Thus the application of the term Thai marked the liberation of the Tai people in the Menam Valley from the Cambodian yoke. Further the word had its origin in the Upper Menam Valley, though now it has its currency mainly in.
southern Siam.

According to some authorities the word 'Tai' as used from ancient times, comes from the Chinese word 'Ta', which means 'great'. Bai has also suggested almost a similar meaning of the word. According to him, 'Tai' means 'glorious' corresponding to Chinese 'celestial'. But it seems improbable that the appellation 'Tai' signifying great or glorious or heaven-born could be of Chinese origin. To the Chinese these people were 'southern barbarians'. Recently Nai Likhit Montrakul of Siam, from his researches in the Chinese sources, has thrown new light on this point. He traces the origin of the racial name Tai to an ancient official title giving certain rights and privileges to its holder. It was Sow-Hao (2nd Emperor: 2596 - 2513 B.C.), the second son of Huang-ti, the first Emperor of China (2697 - 2596 B.C.) and uncle of Hwan-yok (3rd Emperor: 2512 - 2485 B.C.), whose descendants received the title of Tai or Tai-Tai which carries with it the full right to levy duties on the waterways. Emperor Hwan-yok, the grand-son of Huang-ti, created a Tai family with a hereditary Tai-Tai title by conferring the title upon his

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9 L. Montrakul comes from a prominent Sino-Thai family of Rama-nace descent.
nephew General Sin-How, who was apparently the grand-son of Seow-Nao. General Sin-How received the title for a victory which he had won over a powerful minister named Hung-Kang, who had led a rebellion against the Emperor with the object of usurping the throne. The title of Tai gave Sin-How and his descendants the right to impose on and collect duties from all who used the waterways of the Poon, (or Phen), the earlier name of the Hwang-Ho or Yellow River, which flows through the provinces of Shan-si and Ho-nan. The enjoyment of the Tai-Tai's hereditary right is said to have ended with the ascendancy of the Hia Dynasty (2205 - 1766 B.C.).

Thus the 'Tai' first appeared in the Chinese history in Shan-si and Ho-nan as early as 2515 B.C. The Tai-Tai was the only hereditary title of rank enjoyed by the highest aristocracy in ancient China and was regarded "as the first Tai, which led to many subsequent Tai titles, without the heritable rights, but accompanied by its meaning of honour, created in subsequent periods as Choung-Tai (Minister), Chi-Tai (Viceroy), Tung-Tai (Under-Secretary of State), Pu-Tai (Provincial Governor), Git-Tai (Provincial Chancellor), Pan-Tai (Provincial Financier), Tien-Tai (Provincial Commander-in-Chief) and Tso-Tai (Intendent of Circuit or Regional Governor)." says Hoontakul, "a high stage or tower or a respectable and independent personage in address. The word is highly regarded

11 Hwang : Yellow, Ho : river.
as meaning freedom and well beloved in the soul of Tai people up to present day. Thus Tai, in course of time, came to carry the sense of high or great in position, which necessarily implied possession of great power and hence freedom from political subjection. When Phra Ruang, in the seventh century used the term 'Thai' to mean the 'free people' he probably did it in this sense of the ancient word Tai.

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

According to Professor Coedes 'Tai' or 'Thai' is synonymous with the name 'Dai'. In the inscription of King Rama Khambeng of Sukhothai, dated 1292, which is said to be the first known specimen of Tai writing in Indo-China, the name of the language and the people is represented by symbols, which Coedes,

13 Ibid. p. 16.
who made the literal translation of the inscription into French, translates as Dai. It is further held that 'Dai' was probably the name of the Tai prior to the separation of the three linguistically and ethnologically closely allied groups of the Thai, Kadai and Indonesians somewhere in Yunnan more than three thousand years ago. But in view of what has been said above about the origin and antiquity of the word Tai - a date more than 4,400 years from now - the word Dai appears to be a later corruption of 'Tai' in certain parts of East Asia. Even to this day the basic word Tai or its aspirated form Thai, and not Dai, is universally used by this race of people to refer to itself everywhere irrespective of their various local names.

Cushing, who worked many years among the Shan, says Tai is the regular form and the writers of the Burmese Shan school agree. Briggs says that the French do not seem to agree among themselves on the point. But Maspero and some others seem to accept Tai as the generic name of the people but adopt the aspirated (Thai or Thai) form for the name of the language. Bishop Pallegoix, a French missionary who served many years in Siam and wrote a dictionary of the language, explains Thai by saying that after Phra Ruang had freed the country from the

Khmers, 'the 

Elmers, 'the Salem took the name of Thai, which signified

"free" as already mentioned above. But Briggs points out

that this explanation is older than Pallegoix. It may be

noted that the term Thai was first applied, according to the

French authorities, only to the inhabitants of the ancient

kingdom of Sukhot'ai, and this was precisely the region to

which the terms Syam, Sajam, Sien and Sien (Hsien), which

finally resulted in Siam, were originally applied. Thus

the name Syam or Sajam in Sukhot'ai appears to have pre­

ceded the name Thai, not Tai. The Tai of Sukhot'ni, however,

have not left any account of their early history to enable us

to solve this question beyond all doubts and more authoritatively.

It is remarkable that the Indonesians of Hai-nan
call themselves Hiao in the centre and Dai in the southern part

and Li and Lai in the south-western part and these groups are

said to speak different dialects which may have sprung originally

from the same language. Paul Benedict's researches have led to

the discovery that close linguistic affinities exist between the

Thai, Kadai and Indonesians. Again 'Dai' or 'Dai' is said to be

another name for 'Dai' and the former might have arisen from the

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16 JAS, vol. 60, 1949, p. 62; Mgr. J. B. Pallegoix;
Description du royaume Thai, ou Siam 2, 64 (Paris, 1854).
17 Briggs: ibid, p. 62.
18 In Tai y and l are often interchangeable. It is
also said that in Malay, the word for 'brown race' is said to be
Sajam (Pallegoix, 1,5) or Sagam (Anna Leonowens, Romance of the
Harem 1).
19 Paul Benedict: "Thai, Kadai and Indonesian, a New
Alignment in South-east Asia", American Anthropologist, vol. 44,
1942.
phonetic variation of the latter word. But 'Doi' means a hill or mountain not only in the northern Siamese language but also in the languages of the northern Tai, such as that of the Aboms of Assam. The words 'Tai' and 'Doi' mean also companions or comrades in the Abom language. Erik Seidenfaden is inclined to believe that 'Li', 'Lai' and 'Loi' are but the other forms of 'Doy' or 'Dai'. In plenty of cases Abom da becomes la in Shan, both being two branches of the same original Tai language. As for instances, Abom dai (thread), doi (mountain or hill), den (moon), dao (star) become respectively lei, loi, lun, and law in Shan. Hence the above change from 'Dai' to 'Lai', 'Loi' or 'Li' is quite possible. The distinguished French orientalist M. Paul Eus, after a careful examination of the vocabularies prepared by Father Savina\textsuperscript{20} says that the 'Dai' or 'Li' language contains many Thai elements. It must also be known that Hai-nan is mentioned by the ancient Chinese writers as the land of the 'barbarian Li people'. Monsieur Dons d'Anty, the consul for France in Canton, who had many opportunities of studying the race, believes that the Li, the inhabitants of the interior of

\textsuperscript{20} Published in the \textit{Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme - Orient}, vol. XXXI, pp. 103-9 under "Lexique Day Francaise" i.e., a French-Day Dictionary and also a comparative table of the two Day dialects.
Hainan, are pure Tai. Fr. Savina actually found in the Hainan island a Tai community, locally called Ong Beer Bae, with a population of 400,000.

THE SHANS:

The name or rather the title 'Tai' undoubtedly refers to the race whereas the designation 'Shan', said to be of Burmese origin, means probably "Highlanders". But actually the Burmese Shans are the descendants of the ancient Tai - Tai, the Great Tai, and all legends agree on this. The Ion records mention contingents from the Shan States of the mountainous country beyond Burma proper entering and invading Upper Burma. Sometimes they refer to the invaders simply as 'Shans'. It may be noted that the word Shan in Chinese means a mountain or highland and to the Burmese the Shans were merely the people, who descended upon the plains of Upper Burma from the Shan States or Hill States of the southern Highlands of Yun-nan.

21 J. George Scott and Hardiman : GUESS, 1, 1. p.187.
22 The late Reverend Father F.M. Savina lived in Hainan for more than four years from 1924 to 1928 and travelled widely. He was a real polyglot and was able to converse with the natives in their own tongue. He wrote among others a monograph on Hainan with its title Monographic de Hainan. He specially studied the Li tribes of Hainan. He broadly classified the population of the island (about 2,000,000) into three groups locally called the Hok-lo, Ong Beer Bae and Hiao-oo or Day. The Hok-lo are Chinese who occupy the northeastern part and all the coast line, the Ong Beer Bae are Tai who occupy the northwestern and the Li tribes the central parts of the island and the Hiao and the Dai, supposed to be Indonesians, occupy respectively the central and southern parts. Major Erik Selenfaden's Note on the Rev. Fr. Savina, JSS, vol. XL, pt. 1, 1952.
23 [Illegible] vol. 69, 1949, p. 64.

12 x 275
a country predominantly of Tai population, particularly the areas adjoining the Northern Shan States of Burma. The Burmese probably referred to these people as Shan after the Chinese Shan-tee and Shan-ven meaning "highlanders". As referred to above the Tai are also called Doi, which means a mountain or a hill. The Chinese name for the Tai people of this area is Pa-i. 'Pa' in Chinese means 'cultivated highlands' and 'i' means 'barbarians'. Hence Pa-i means barbarian or non-Chinese cultivators of the highlands of Yun-nan. It is said that the Burmese originally learnt the terracing of hill slopes for cultivation from the Tai cultivators of Nanchao in Yun-nan. It appears that Chinese 'Shan' was Burmanized into 'Shan' and written as Shan as the Burmese words ending in m are usually turned into n. But the peoples, referred to as Shans in Burma, called themselves only Tai.

Mr. A.R. Colquhoun, who made extensive travels of exploration in the Southern provinces of China, found that most of the aborigines of that region were shans although the Chinese called them by various nicknames. Their propinquity to the Chinese is largely responsible for their gradual change in habits, manners, and dress and their absorption by that people. What is true of the Shans of China in this respect

26 Colquhoun : op.cit., p. 207.
28 Fallett: Historical Sketch of the Shans in Colquhoun's Amongst the Shans, p. 328.
is also true of the Ahoms of Assam and many of the Shan's of Burma outside the Shan States. The Ahoms took to the Hindu ways of life and many Shan's of Burma to the Burmese ways in dress, language and culture. Particularly in the fashion of their clothing the North-western Shan's have assimilated themselves to the Burmans in the midst of whom they live. But yet the racial identity of the Tai-Shan's is recognisable from their physical type, colour, tradition and history.

The Burmese gave the appellation 'Shan' to those Tai that entered the plains of Burma in the thirteenth century A.D. This apparently refers to the period when Kublai Khan's invasion of Ta-li in 1253 caused a mass migration of these people, mostly as refugees, into the Shan States of Upper Burma and the Upper Menam Valley in Siam. But the word Shan or Shan must have been formed and used at a date much earlier than this. During the early centuries of the Christian era the peoples of Burma almost certainly knew the Tai as Taroks or Tayoks (but written as 'Tarops'). There is mention in Burmese history of two irruptions into Burma by the Taroks from Yun-nan, one not long before the Christian era and most probably during Rhinaka Raja's reign in old Pagan in the first quarter of the sixth century B.C., and the other about A.D. 241 or

30 Harvey : History of Burma, Calcutta, 1925, p. 4.
31 In Burmese Tayok or later mentioned as Shan-Tayok.
probably A.D. 225. According to Cushing, an eminent authority on the Shans, these invaders could not have been Chinese, for the Chinese did not establish any real connection with the Burmans until after the conquest of Yun-nan by Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century. These Taroks must have been the Tai, who were in that period the most predominant people in Yun-nan. Cushing is of the opinion that the irruptions mentioned here seem to indicate the presence at those early dates of a powerful Tai kingdom or kingdoms in Yun-nan, whence the invaders were sent.

Of the earlier migrations of the Tai into Burma that of the sixth century A.D. is of historic importance. These immigrants from South-west China, who were not, however, known as Shans, advanced westwards along the river valleys of Upper Burma and conquered the territories then under an Indian dynasty, whose capital was at Tagaung and about whom more would be told later. What is noteworthy here is that all these invaders, who came and established their political supremacy over Upper Burma, called themselves Tai as found in the ancient Chronicles. As they entered Burma immediately from South-west China they may be designated more specifically as Tai-Khe or Tai-Che. Major Davies points out that it is in the Shan States of Burma and also perhaps of its eastern neighbourhood that these Chinese Shans are so called. The Chinese Shans generally call themselves Tai No or Northern Tai (Shans), while they refer to the

inhabitants of the Shan States as Tai Tau, Southern Tai (Shans), and not Tai-Long, Great Tai (Shans). A few Tai Tau also exist in Yunnan close to the Burmese border in Heng-ting.33 The Tai-Khe or Tai-No branch of the Tai is also known in the Shweli river valley as Tai-Mao or simply as Mao. But Shan or Shan is a distinctive appellation used by the Burmese to refer to the Tai immigrants of a much later period and under different circumstances. According to an eminent writer 'Shan' appears to be the collective Burmese name given to all different Tai peoples that entered Burma just as 'Lao' is the collective Siamese name for the Tai peoples formerly subject to Siam and since 1896 who became mostly French subjects.34 In this sense the appellation 'Shan' is more political than purely ethnical and represents the nation as distinguished from the different groups constituting it. Even the Thai people of Siam are called Shan by the Burmese. To the Annamites they are Xiem, which is perhaps a variant of Siam. Major H.R. Davies points out that the Kachins, A-Chungs, Zis and La-shis call the Shan by the name of Sam, the Ma-ru name for them is Sen, the Palaung name is Tsem, the Wa name Shem, and the Talungs call them Sem.35 All these names appear to be mere phonetic variations of the original word 'Shan' in the different tribal tongues.

33 Yunnan, pp. 380-81.
34 Keane : ibid., p. 191.
Siam:

"Siam" is another name of which the origin is a subject of controversy. It is said that Siam is the same word as Shan, a form coming to us through the Portuguese Siau. J. Leyden points out that "by the Burmese, they (the Siamese) are denominated Siom, from whence the Portugeuse seem to have borrowed their Siam or Siom, from whom the other nations of Europe have adopted the term." Others believe that it has been derived from Malay Sayam meaning "brown." Cushing says that "it may not be generally known that the form Siam is nothing but a corruption of the French method of writing Shan as 'Sciam.' He further says that "in adopting the French method of spelling the word, we mispronounce the name because we make two syllables of the word. This mispronunciation, however, has become generally accepted, and to call the Shans of Bangkok anything but Siamese would be needlessly misleading as well as pedantic. Moreover, the difference in the name is now useful, as it marks off the Southern branch of the Tai or Htai race." Dr. Grierson, who substantially agrees with Cushing, also points out that the word 'Siam' appears to be an Anglicised form of the Portuguese or Italian 'Sciam,' which is an attempt to write 'Shan,' a variant of 'Shan.'

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36 Keane: ibid., p. 191.
"On the Languages and Literature of the Indo-Chinese Nations" by J. Leyden, M.D. - X They.
words Sam, Siam and also Cham (not the Austronesian Cham of modern Annam) undoubtedly stand for the original name Shan. That the Tai, the Shans, the Siamese and the Ahoms (from A-sham) belong to the same racial group is proved by the fact that the Tai from the north are called Shan-gyi or Great Shans by the Burmese, 'Sam' in Assam by the Assamese and Tai-gut or the left behind Tai by the Siamese, the latter meaning those Tai who did not come with the Siamese to Ayuthia, the Siamese themselves being called Yodia Shan by the Burmese. 40

But the above explanations are concerned mainly with the form of the word 'Siam' and not with its origin. Regarding the latter point some scholars suggest that the name 'Siam' is derived from the sanskrit word Syama meaning 'black'. When the Indians first colonised this country the fair-coloured Hindus called the native population "Black" (Skt. Syama, Pali, Samo). This black population, according to these writers, referred to the Thai, who, on their part, called the country Muang Thai, the country of the Thai people. 41 But this view is obviously wrong, because the Thai people are as fair as the Hindus or rather fairer on the average. If the early Hindu colonists would have at all applied the term 'Syama' to designate a black race they would have done so more appropriately to refer to the black-skinned

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

41 C. Schlegel : Siamese studies, 1902, pp. 6-7; P. N. Bose : The Indian colony of Siam, 1927, p. 2.
inhabitants of Funan (Southern Cambodia), where they had landed much earlier than in Siam and spread their culture. The Funanese were described as ugly, black, frizzy-haired and naked by Kang Tai, a Chinese envoy, who visited that country between A.D. 245 and A.D. 250. Kang Tai was also the first person to mention in his accounts the name of Hun-tien, who founded the kingdom of Funan in the first century A.D. It is also said that Hun-tien was but a Chinese transliteration of Kaundinya, a political adventurer from India. The name ‘Kaundinya’ suggests that he was the descendant of the original Kaundinya, who was a Brahman, but was first to be converted by Buddha.⁴² But in this case the conqueror of Funan (Komboja-desa) appears to be a Hindu Kṣatriya prince of the Kaundinya gotra and the kings of that dynasty adopted this family name. Maspero suggests that the first invasion by Kaundinya came from Java and formed part of a great movement, possibly with its central seat in Java, that led to the foundation of other Hindu States in Champa and Borneo in that early period of the Christian era. At that time the modern Siam was included in the dominions of the Empire of Funan, which extended from Annam to the Bay of Bengal. It is extremely doubtful that there was any Tai population worth the name in the Funan

⁴² Edward J. Thomas: The History of Buddhist Thought, 1955, pp. 156, 183. Hun-tien’s name is mentioned in the annals of the Chi dynasty (479-501). But in the annals of the Tsin dynasty the stranger’s name is given as Hun-Hai, who worshipped the Devas and had a dream, in which one of them gave him a bow and ordered him to sail for Funan. He then set out for this new land and conquered it and married the queen, who ruled there. vide Pelliot’s Funan, also Eliot: op.cit., vol. III, pp. 104-5.
valley in that early period. It is also not known that the Tai of Siam ever professed Hinduism as a national religion.

In the tenth century A.D., the central part of Thailand (Siam) was called by the Mon-speaking people of Dvaravati as "Sama-des" or the Land of the Sems. Briggs refers to a Pali document, Jingkalamalini written in 1516 which, in speaking of events in 1339, mentions 'Sukhodayapurā in Syamadesa' (i.e., country of the Syam, or of the 'dark brown people'). Phya Anuman Rajadhan, an eminent Thai scholar of Bangkok, points out that the word 'Sam' was Pali-ized into 'Sama' and then Sanscritized into 'Syama' and Europeanized into 'Siam'. This appears to be the most probable development of the word 'Sam' or 'Shan' into 'Siam'. Some scholars trace the origin of the word Siam to 'Sien' of the Chinese, who applied that name to the Thai kingdom of Sukhothai (Skt. Sukhodaya). Francis Buchanan, from his local investigations learns that the Thai people of Siam were called 'Syanlō' or 'Kyaenlo' by the Chinese of Yun-nan. Thus these Syianlo or Siemlo were the people of 'Sien' country or Sukhothai. The Khmers used the name 'Syam' to refer to the 'Savages' from the middle Menam. That these savages were no other than the Tai, who were destined to be the powerful rivals of the Khmers, is further confirmed by the fact that in the bas-reliefs of

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43 JACOS, vol. 69, 1949, pp. 68-9; also JRES-Q 1925, 95.
44 Hall: op.cit., p.150; P.N. Bose: op. cit., Foreword by P.O. Bagchi, pp. V-VII.
the South-west gallery of the Angkor Wat are depicted soldiers dressed like the Cambodians and described in the inscriptions as troops of Lvo, while those depicted on the South gallery and dressed and armed in a different manner are mentioned as the soldiers of Syam-Kuk (Sukhothai), the latter being Thai mercenaries exhibited as representing martial characteristics different from those of the Cambodians.

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

The territories which the Tai mostly inhabited in the Menam valley were known as Siem, Syam or Syama. According to Gerini the Mon word for Siamese is Sem; the Khmer word is Siem; the Chinese word is Sien or Heien; the Cham, Syam; Syam.

46 Angkor is a corruption of Nakor (= Nagar), Angkor Thom = Mahanagara. - Eliot, op.cit., III, p. 110.
47 The country of Lvo is also mentioned in an inscription of the end of the tenth century A.D. discovered at Lopburi, Lvo of the Angkor-Vat inscription, Le hou of the Chinese annals, and Lvo of the ancient Siamese is the same as the Lopburi (Skt. Navapura) flourishing in the lower valley of the Menam. - P.C. Bagchi in P. M. Bose's book, p. V.
48 Hall; op.cit., p. 144.
49 Eliot; op.cit., III, p. 79.
and the Malay, Siam. Briggs thinks that the first Europeans, the Portuguese, who came in contact with the Siamese in 1511, called them Sião (= Siam in English), probably from Malay. This explanation is less convincing than that given by Cushing. The name 'Syam' is found first in an inscription of Champa (in Sanskrit) of A.D. 1050. The Cham inscription speaks of taking Syam prisoners along with Khmers and Chinese. About a century later (1150) they appear on the bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat as mercenaries in the Khmer army where the accompanying sanskrit inscriptions call them Syam and Syam-kuk. Syam here refers to the Tai of the upper or rather middle Menam. According to Gerini, the word appears in Ptolemy's Sama-rade which is interpreted as Sāmarāṭha. Here 'Syam' is commonly identified with Sanskrit 'Syama' meaning black or dark, but actually Syama appears to be a Sanskritized distortion of the non-Sanskrit original. Further Samarade is in the lower Menam valley where the presence of the Tai in Ptolemy's time is most improbable. The Chinese historians refer to frequent embassies appearing at the Chinese court from the States of Sien (Haien) and Lo-hou between 1282 and 1329 and these two States were undoubtedly the Syam and Lvo of the Khmers as mentioned in the inscribed labels of Angkor Wat.

50 JAC, vol. 69, 1949, p. 69.
52 Paul Pelliot: Deux itineraires etc. BEFEO 1904, 236-38.
Syam and Ivo are identified with Sukhot'ai and Lopburi. About the same time, the name *Sien-lo* (Hsien-lo) was also applied by the Chinese to these people. The kingdom of Sukhot'ai was then well known in Eastern Asia under the name Syam or Sien and its founders were called Syam-kuk or Sien-lo. Aymonier read the name in the Angkor Wat inscriptions as Syam-kut and Pelliot followed his reading, but Coedes, who made a thorough study of these inscriptions, says the reading is clearly Syam-kuk. At this time the territories south of Ivo were still held by the Cambodians. In the above context Sien, Siem and Syam appear to be the variants of Shan or Sham, and Siam is the Europeanized form of it. Chinese Sien was simply the land

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53 Pelliot: Mémoires sur les coutumes de Cambodge, par Teou Ta-Kouan, 1902, 112 as referred to by Briggs in *JAS*, vol. 69, 1949, p. 62.
54 Bulletin de la commission archéologique de l'Indochine 1911, 203, note 3; *JAS*, vol. 69, 1959, p. 62.
of the Shan people. The terms Svam or Sama preceded the name Thai in this area.

These Tai people were earlier living in the hills in Southern Yun-nan before getting down to the fertile plains of the Mekong and the Menam rivers. Most of these people had to seek shelter in the hills leaving their homes in the rich plains of Sas-ohuea, Yun-nan and Kweir-chow as early as the third century A.D. when General Chuko-Liang of

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

the Han invaded Yunnan, apparently to put down a rebellion.
The last great exodus of these people to the south was when in
the middle of the thirteenth century the Mongols under Kublai
Khan swept down to South China. It seems therefore that the
appellations Shan (or Sham), Sam, Sien, Siem, Syam or Siam were
used from about the ninth or tenth century A.D. by the
different peoples in referring to the Tai immigrants from
the southern highlands of Yunnan. But the name Siam became
prominent in history only in the thirteenth century which
is also the Sukhodaya period. 57

ASSAM : AHOM :

The Shans from Burma were called Sam in Assam and at
a later stage Sam became Sanskritized into Syam among the
Assamese Hindus. The name of the Shans as Sam was perhaps
first heard by the inhabitants of Eastern Assam from the
Kachins (Singphos on the Assam side) on the eastern border of
Assam. In Assam 'Sam' or 'Syam' does not mean 'black', only
the tribe is known by that name to the local people. The
appellation Ahom is applied to the pre-British Tai rulers of
Assam. After the British occupation of Assam the Ahoms found
themselves gradually reduced to the status of a district
community only among the population of the Brahmaputra valley,

57 In the English language the name Siamese refers to the people of Siam and Siam refers to the country of these
people. L. Hoentrakul points out that King Khun Sri Indratit
of Sawankalok moved southward and built a capital called
Sukhat'ai and established a kingdom called Siam. He also says
Does Siam mean here simply the most powerful kingdom or a
great kingdom? It is difficult to explain the word Siam in
this sense in reference to the Siamese people.
their habitat being virtually confined to the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur in Eastern (or Upper) Assam. The word 'Ahom' appears to be a phonetic variation of 'Asam' or 'Asama', which is itself a Sanskritized distortion of Ā-Sām, a form of Bodo origin. Ā in Bodo means earth, land or country and when the Tai or Sāms conquered the upper part of the Brahmaputra valley in Assam and established their kingdom in it the Bodo people called that area Ā-Sām, the country or kingdom of the Sāms. In the old Assamese Buranjis the writers referred to the Ahoms or their kingdom as Asam, Acam, Asyam or Acam. These words were so written either from actual Ā-Sām, the land of the sāms or its Sanskritized variant Āsam (peerless, unequalled) which the Pandits used in their writings during the great days of the Ahoms. The words Asam, Acam and Asam (or Asom) were further corrupted in the early British period into Abam and Abam and lastly into Abom, the present form of the earlier Sam or Asam to refer to the race instead of the country. Whatever may be the course of word development according to the rules of Philology, it is difficult to think otherwise than that 'Asam' developed from 'Sam' in the dialects of the peoples of the Brahmaputra valley region and, at a later period, Asam was put in writings in the Sanskritized form Āsam, from which the name Abom has evolved. Assam (Anglicized) or Asam is the land of the Sāms (the Tai-Ahoms), who first established their kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley in the thirteenth century. The name Āsam, and not Sanskritized Assamese 'Asam' (Asama), is therefore correct in the original.
sense, 'Asām' refers to a definite political change in the history of Assam, whereas 'Aṣam' is a convenient transformation under Sanskrit influence and hence admitting of all manner of explanations, such as unequal, uneven etc. In recent times the Assamese have, however, preferred the Sanskritized form Aṣam to A-sam or Assam and have used it as the standard form of the name of their State. In this connection it may be mentioned that the term "Asamiya" (Assamese) means the Aryan Assamese language of Assam and, in the present day practice, the term is also used more and more to mean only the section of the population speaking this language. But in history by the term Assamese (Aṣām or Aṣam) only the Ahoms (the Tai of Assam) were referred to both by the Mugal writers58 and Hindu Vaishnava preachers.59 The Mugal writer's Aṣām and the Vaishnava writer's Aṣam were without doubt merely characteristic variants of original A-sām.

But the Ahoms have never referred to themselves as Shan or Sam or by any of its Assamese variants including Ahom in their own literature or ḫuruṇjīg, written in Tai. This is true of their writings down to the end of their rule in Assam. They always called themselves Tai and their scholars wrote as such throughout the historical period. The downfall of the Ahom

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

59 Assamese Nam Gosa (501).
rule was followed by a dark period in the glorious traditions of Assam. With the loss of independence and under the changed conditions, political and cultural, of the last hundred years or so the Ahoms have fast deteriorated in mental and physical vigour and forgotten their own language, history and historical link with their race in the great sub-continent of South-east Asia. As a result they now generally call themselves not Tai but by the local name Ahom which is little known to the Tai of the rest of Asia. Only in very recent times historical researches seem to have brought a certain degree of consciousness to the Ahoms about their past and racial identity.

Two other explanations of the terms Ahom and Assam deserve consideration. Dr. B.K. Kakati has attempted to connect the term Assam as applied to the Shans with Tai cham, "to be defeated", with the Aryan Assamese privative prefix a-; the whole formation Assam meaning "undefeated", 'victorious', thus being a hybrid equivalent of the word Thai (Tai) meaning free. This explanation appears to be far-fetched. The Ahoms never called themselves Asam or Acham. If the Aryanized people of Assam ever called them by that name in the above sense it would presuppose a knowledge of the Tai language on their part in order that a comparatively obscure foreign word, such as 'cham', might be so used to coin a new word. But it is difficult to believe that the Assamese had already any such knowledge. Moreover the word cham (Sham or Hsah as the Shans pronounce it) is a verb.

60 The Mother Goddess Kamakiva, p. 2.
only and is not used either as an adjective or a noun. Hence Asam or Aeham as a noun from cham is unlikely. If Asam be a hybrid equivalent of the word Thai meaning free; 'Sam', or 'Siamese' would mean 'unfree' which is contrary to facts of history.

Dr. S.K. Chatterji suggests that the name Abom comes from Rhwam, a name by which the Burmese referred to the Shan people when they first met the latter. The Burmese wrote the word Rhwam in the Mon script which they had adopted in the eleventh century A.D. "In course of centuries, owing to certain characteristic developments of the Burmese phonology, the word has now come to be pronounced in Modern Burmese as Shan, although the old orthography as Rhwam still persists (Rhwm / Yhwm / Hyam / Gvam / Shan : ...). Now, the name Abom would appear to be connected as a tribal name with this Rhwam: "Dr. Chatterji seems to believe that either from early dropping of the initial R - in Abom mouths, or its modification to A gave the form Abom. He further says that "Abom as a foreign tribal name was not properly understood by Old Assamese speaking Hindu and other Bodos when the Abom conquerors came into East Assam, and it would appear that the name Abom was sought to be 'corrected', into what was thought to be its original Sanskrit form, as A-sama and this gave the word Asam-Assam as the name of the country which the Aboms conquered and established themselves in."

61 The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India - Banikanta Rakati Memorial Lectures, Gauhati, 1954, PP. 42-3.
already the modern Ahoms never wrote nor called themselves Ahom as a corruption of Rhyam. The word is nowhere to be found in their Tai-Ahom literature. Hence it is difficult to imagine that the Assamese of those days could get this tribal name from the Ahoms to be corrected into its supposed Sanskrit form. Further it is Assam, Asam, Asam or Aea that is generally found in the earlier Assamese literature, the form Ahom being the latest development and that too in the British period. The Bodos predominated in Eastern Assam at the time the Tai-Ahomams entered that land. The Machins and the Bodos called the Tai-Ahoms Sam. It is most certain that Assam, the name of the country, is from A-Sam, the country of the Sams, which was later Sanskritized into A-sama from which the forms Assom and Ahom gradually arose.

THE PAI:

The Tai of South China are called Pai-yi (barbarians). They are chiefly concentrated in the South-western bulge of Yunnan across the frontier of Burma where they are also called Thai Nu'a. But the Pai-yi of southeastern Yunnan seem to be the ancestors of the Lao-tians, as well as of the Black Tai and White Tai of Tonkin. In early periods they were referred to by the peoples of Burma as Taroks or Shan-Taroks and in the later period as Shans. These names were probably applied by the Pyu and the

63 JADE, Vol. 69, 1949, p. 66.
Mons of Burma, whose dominions once extended far to the
north and were subject to inroads from China from time to time.
The Tai people of South China have numerous sub-groups whom
the Chinese called by various names, such as P'o, Pa or Pai-i,
Shu, Han or Hua Pai-i, Pai-jen, T'u-jen, P'u-man, Pai, Hei,
or Hua T'u-loo, Hsiung or Lung-jen, Shu-jen, Hei or Pai Sha-jen,
Min-Chia, or Min-Ch'iang, Shui-Chia and Chang-Chia. Among all
these the Pai is the most numerous element and the Chinese
use it as synonymous with Tai.

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

64 GÜßE, "Ethnology", p. 619.
65 Pai is variously spelt as Pa-i, Pai-i, Pai-yi, Pa-yi,
Pai-y, Pai'y, Peyih, Pa-yeh etc.
66 In the Shan Buddhist language 'pai', pronounced as
'pwei', means a religious festival.
67 American Anthropologist, vol. 51, Nov. 1, 1949,
pp. 46-59.
strikingly similar to those of the Assamese Bihu festivals. The appellation Pai from Pai cults is undoubtedly a vulgar way of interpreting the meaning of the word. Pai means simply a festival and is not restricted to the cults mentioned above. What is important here is the essential features of the festivals which are more or less common to the festivals elsewhere among the Tai.

Professor T. de Lacouperie, relying on the Chinese sources, points out that the Pa or Pa-Y are a branch of the Tai and are scattered from the south of Szechuen, throughout Yünnan and south borders. We hear of them in 1971 B.C. when the Chinese ruler, Fei of His, is reputed to have sent to them his minister.

68 There are six Pai cults of which the Great Pai is the most important, the other cults being Public Pai, Chin-Huang-Tan-Pai, Kam-To-Pai, Ting-Tang-Pai and Lam-se-Pai. The Great Pai, in its essentials, consists of the exhibition of certain articles which the house-holder presents as offerings to the village Buddhist temple. The ceremony extends over at least three days accompanied with various other activities including dancing, singing, feasting and procession. Other Pai festivals provide occasions for demonstrating the whole procedure of clothing manufacture, arts and crafts and their products and also the arrangement of daily work according to seasonal changes. The Assamese Bihu too, apart from their religious significance, if any, must have had as their cardinal feature, demonstration of the basic arts and culture and the mode of social life of the community. The Assamese national festival called Bohag Bihu, which is celebrated annually in April on the grandest scale with dances, songs, instrumental music and congregational merriment and with the exhibition of the best samples of clothes woven by the women in every family, represents the tastes and the artistic achievements of the Assamese people. Likewise the harvest festival of Magh Bihu, which is characterised by social entertainments with the choicest dinners and exhibition of wrestling power of the youth and of animal fighting, represents the richness and variety of the harvests of the season. Stripped of their religious coating, whether Buddhist or Hindu, this group of social festivals, wherever they are found, in Yünnan, Burma or Assam, appears to be peculiar to the Tai and the associated peoples.
Mang-t'u. They were subdued by the State of Ts'in in 338 B.C., and since that time have slowly advanced southwards. The oldest settlements were in Western Szechuen.69 The early account given here refers to the mythical period and, without denying some K'i. of Hia (Haia) of the time, we can not be definitely sure that there ever was a Chinese ruling House called Hia and hence Mang-tu's mission. Apparently at that time the Pa-y were enjoying free and independent life with a system of government of their own. But whether the Tai were actually known to the early kings of China by the name of Pa-y is doubtful. It is equally doubtful if there were 'Chinese rulers' at that time. As regards the Pai people's movement further to the south from their earlier home in Western Szechuan, J. Denikar says that their migrations may be followed from the first century B.C., when "the Pa-y tribes came from Szechuan into Western Yun-nan to found there the kingdom of Lui-Tchao. Another kingdom, that of Huang-ling,70 was founded more to the south-west in Upper Burma". The cause of these migrations was the pressure of the Chinese from the north.

Henri d' Orleans points out that Pa-i is only another name for Lao. He constantly met Pa-i groups all along the route from Tungking to Assam. He further says that the bulk of the lowland population of Assam (meaning the Aboms), from whom Assam takes its name, belongs originally to the same family.71 Rev. William Clifto-

70 Probably Mong Long.
71 Keane: op. cit., p. 192.
Dodd writes that both Pa and Lung belong to the Lao race and that he found both these tribes in Southern Yun-nan during his journey of 1910. They still bear the ancient tribal names, Pa and Lung. The modern Chinese call them Pa-i, the Pa barbarians and Lung-i, the Lung people. The Lung (or Lung) are mostly found now in Kwangtung and Kwangsi. Dodd also says that their own speech is Lao or Tai as he found by talking with them and hearing them talk. The modern Pa call themselves Tai, but are invariably mentioned as Pa-i by the Chinese writers.72

THE MUNG:

Chinese annals refer to another group of people, called Ta Lung or Dai Lung, that is the Great Lung, Belonging to the same race, mentioned in the geographical survey instituted under the Emperor Ta Yu or Dai Yu (the Great Yu), said to be the founder of the Ma (or Hsia) dynasty.73 Hira Sarasaa points out that it was the Chinese who called this race (Tai) Dai Lung instead of Al-Lao.74 The Mung established themselves in China before the advent of the Chinese, but as to the origin and meaning of the word "Mung", nothing definite is known except that they are an integral section of the Tai. "The Mung", says Dr. Dodd, "belong to the Al-Lao race. The Al-Lao belong to the aborigines; the aborigines preceded the Chinese in the migration from the West.

72 Dodd: The Tai Race; Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1923, chap. 1.
74 Al-Lao means senior or elder people, Sarasaa: My Country Thailand; Its History, Geography and Civilization, p. 4.
the Chinese themselves came earlier than 2200 B.C., probably much earlier. If this statement can be relied upon then the pre-Ch’in early empires of the great Lao people can be said to have extended over the major part of the present China and the ruling aristocracy of the race, known as the Tai, spread to the different territorial divisions of the Lao dominions for the management of their administration. In later centuries the Ch’in Imperialists, in their vast drive for expansion, simply discovered the descendants of the early Tai, both as politically dominant communities in some areas and as scattered elements in others in the Central Belt of China and southwards and called them by various nicknames.

Ta Yu’s reign is said to have commenced about 2208 B.C., and his name is mentioned in what is probably the earliest literary work, the Shih Ching (Classic of Poetry). The great Mung people, who were contemporary of Ta Yu, must have had a glorious career in the early period of China, but we know little about it except by way of casual references to them made by Chinese historians until their reappearance as builders of the Nan-Chao empire in the seventh century A.D. The Ta Mung were in the region of the setting sun according to the Erh-Ya, the oldest known Chinese dictionary, compiled in the fifth century B.C., and their habitat was in the western part of the Sze-chuan province. The chief characteristic of the Mung people, as stated by the Chinese compilers, was sincerity. The Mung formed the

75 Dodd: op. cit., chap. I.
leading family of the Nan-Chao agglomeration of tribes which united under it to set up that powerful Ai-Lao kingdom in Yunnan which was destined later to flourish as the Nan-Chao empire. The Mung also played a leading part in several other agglomerations in subsequent periods. They migrated eastwards and are to-day known to the Annamese as Muongs, who spread throughout the hilly regions in Tonking.

THE LU : THE HKUH : THE YUNS : THE TCHAO :

It has been noted that Luh or Lu and Muang or Hmong are but different clan names of the same Tai-Shan race. The Lu of the left bank of the Mekong form the bulk of the population in the State of Hsip Haawng Mong (Keng Hung : lat. 22°, long. 100°50') and the neighbouring parts of southern Yunnan. Keng Hung is the Cheli of the Chinese and the Hsip Haawng Panna (XII Panna) of the local Tai. Keng Tung has another group of Tai people called Hmou. The Yuns are concentrated in Len-nya. These three sections of the Tai race are supposed to have descended from the Ngai-Lao above them on the Mekong, with whose Kengs theirs were continuous. Briggs says that they mixed with the Karens and with still earlier Lawas whose dwellings in the hills surrounded them. The Yuns conquered the Mons of Haripunjai and absorbed them. According to Pierre Lefevre-Pontalis the Lu spread to the south establishing their

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77 T. de Lacouperie : op. cit., p. 11; Dodds, op. cit., chap. I.
78 Dodds : ibid ; Hallett : op. cit., p. 329.
79 Davies : Yunnan, p. 381.
Kingdom of Lao Chong below the Heip-Kuang-Fanna in A.D. 701 with its capital of Chiang Rao which was in the beginning of the tenth century A.D. moved near Chiang Sen. The Tchao, as mentioned in connection with Luh-Tchao, were simply the easternmost branch of the same Tai race that occupied Central China at that time. They lived in what is now An-mui in the vicinity of the Lao mountains. The meaning of the name Tchao is, according to Professor T. de Lacouperie, a nesting people, so called from their habit of building their houses on piles. He further says that it was among them, possibly as a cognate tribe, that the founder of the Shang dynasty exiled Kieh, the last ruler of the overthrown Hia dynasty in 1558 B.C. The Tchao spread southwards in the subsequent periods into Kiang-si and became an important constituent of the population of the Tsu Kingdom. In the tenth century A.D. they moved under pressure from the north into the region of Huan, western Kwang-si and Kweitchou and many even left China for the neighbouring countries. They are still largely represented by the Tu-jen, Tchung-kia and other tribes now found in Kwang-si and Kwei-chow. Some of these people must have migrated even from much earlier times to Yun-nan and Burma and set up their own States.

THE LAOS:

A very important section of the Tai called Lao deserve special study. To-day the inhabitants of North Siam are described...
as Lao. Actually the Laos are scattered over southern China, northern French Indo-China and the north and north-eastern parts of Siam itself. It is the southern Thai who call the Thai people of northern and eastern Siam Lao. Cushing mentions the Lao as one of the several divisions of the Tai family. He further says that the Siamese form the southern half and the Laos the northern half of the kingdom of Siam. According to H.R.H. Prince Damrong "Lao" is a nickname used as a contraction of the word Lawa or Lwa. Briggs says that the use of Lao is now specifically applied to a specific Tai people, called Laoians by the French. He further says that recently an attempt has been made to extend the appellation Lao to the Lawas, who are quite a different people. The Lawas are one of the darker races, but the pure Laos (Tai) are fair. Here it is important to note Hallett's investigation who points out that the Lawa, or Lwa, were the aboriginal inhabitants to the south of Yunnan and were driven southward and into the hills by the Yun or Karen, who, on their part, had to move southward under Shan pressure. This appears to be true as the Ngai-Laos and the Laos are undoubtedly Tai, whereas the Lawas are not. There is

82 Wood : History of Siam, 1933, p. 31.  
85 Credner : Cultural and Geographical Observations made in Tai (Yunnan) Region with Special regard to the Nan-Chao Problem, Bangkok, 1934, Translator's Comments, p. 19.  
86 JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 69; Erick Seidenfaden : Anthropological and etnomedical research work in Siam, JSS, 28, 1.15-6 (1933); W.A. Graham : Siam, 131-3 (2 vols : London, 1824).  
87 JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 69.  
88 Historical Sketch of the Shao, in Amongst the Shao, pp. 338-39.
another Tai group called Leu who are found chiefly beyond the Cambodian river and are tributary to Siam. Yule locates them in Wintchian and Lentchian.

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

In regard to the trend of migration of the Tai in Indo-China Cushing observes: "It is probable that the earliest regions occupied by the Tai were in the upper part of Burma. The Siamese, who are the latest division to emigrate and settle in their present home, call themselves Htai Noi or Little Tai and name the Laos Htai Nai or Great Tai. The Laos, in turn, use the term Great Tai to designate the Shan communities farther to the north. The appellation Tai Long, which is the equivalent of the Siamese Htai Nai, really belongs to the Shans of Northern Burma, and is accepted by them. This would seem to indicate that that region is recognised as the one occupied by that portion of the race which made the earliest migration." 89

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

The ancient home of the Laos was in the eastern part of Central China to the north of the Yang-tse-Kiang occupying most of the region extending from Sze-chuan to An-hui. E. Seidenfeld is of the opinion that the southern Thai wrongly give the name Lao to the northern and north-eastern Thai people of Siam, for the word Lao or Ai-Lao probably denoted not the race but the region from which these Thai people came. This view deserves attention and, if supported by ancient geography of the region,

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90 Cremer's Monograph Cultural and Geographical Observations made in the Tai (Yunnan) Region with Special Regard to the Non-Chao Problem, Bangkok, 1935: Translator's Comments, p. 19.
will solve a puzzling question arising from the multiplicity of names of the race. Mr. E.H. Parker, quoting chiefly the Annals of the Chinese T'ang dynasty, points out that "the Annamese still call the Laos of Upper Siam by the name of Ai-Lao." 91 He further says that Ai-Laos were next called Non-Chao when they reappeared upon the Chinese political stage. 92 That Non-Chao was Tai no body disputes. "Chao," according to the Chinese, is a barbarian word for "Prince." It means "Prince" in Siamese, Shan, Lao and Ahom. The geographical distribution of the Lao people in the region from North Siam to Yun-nan also connects the so-called Lao of Siam with the Ai-Lao of Yun-nan as one people. It seems a branch of the Tai that lived in the area of the Lao Shan (i.e., Lao Mountain) at the intersection of Honan, Huphs and Yen-huy (An-hui) provinces, acquired the name of Lao or Ai-Lao. These Lao people gradually extended their habitat to the Kiu-lung range forming the boundaries of Shen-si and Sze-Chuan provinces. 93 Perhaps it was in this area that the Chinese imperialists, during their period of political expansion, first discovered this race towards the last quarter of the third century B.C., and recorded their relations with these people from which T. de Lacouperie came to the conclusion that "the cradle of the Shan (Tai) race was in the Kiu-lung mountains," as noted above. The Laos, in their turn, had many sub-groups, such as Shen-Lao, Ko-Lao, Po-Lao, etc. These Ai-Laos

92 GUBBS, i. i. p. 280.
93 T. de Lacouperie: op. cit., p. liii.
(Ngai-Laos) also emerged as a ruling race in the first century of the Christian era in Yun-nan with their centre at Mt. Lao about which more would be said in the next chapter.

THE TIDS AND MUONGS:

Among the other groups of the Tai the Thos and Muongs of the eastern part of Indo-China are important. The Thos are mostly found to inhabit the region to the east of the Red River in Tongking and also Kwang-si in China. The word Tho is probably a local variant of "Dai" or "Doi" of Professor Coedes. They now mostly occupy the hilly areas but were the early inhabitants of Kwang-si, southern Kwei-Chow and eastern Yun-nan. The Muongs (or Mongs) of Tongking occupy the region to the west of the Red River and are presumed to be an offshoot of the great Muang (Tai) community of China. The Thos and Muongs speak a Tai dialect which is very much altered by the influence of the Chinese and Annamese languages.

THE PANG:

A section of the Tai, the Pang, had been flourishing in central China even from before the foundation of the ancient Shang (or In) dynasty. The Pang were called Ngao (or Yao), the great or powerful. They later became the ruling race in the powerful State of Ch’u (or T’su), a great rival of Ch’in (T’ain). They are mentioned in the ancient Chinese Annals.

94 The Thos are sub-brachy-cephalic of lofty stature having elongated face, straight non-Mongoloid eyes and brownish complexion. They are husbandmen, living in houses built on piles and wearing a very picturesque costume. - Denikar: op. cit., pp. 400-402.
95 Ibid., pp. 400-402.
Confucius speaks of "Our old Pang" 96 and in other records there appears "the Patriarch Pang", who ruled for an unusually long time. While Pang is the form of the name of "the Patriarch Pang", the founder of the dynasty, Pan-hu is that by which the later Chinese have heard of him among his descendants, in the province of Hunsen, where they have more or less diverged from their original type. Some two thousand years before Christ the Pang were ruling in Central China in the area immediately to the north of Sze-chuan and Hupch as contemporary of the Hia, but their sovereignty was destroyed by Shang Wu-ting in 1231 B.C. after it had existed for more than seven hundred years. The whole period of their sovereign rule was afterwards fabulously believed to be the lifetime of their first Chief, the Patriarch Pang. 97 "The Pang or Pan-hu race", says Rev. W. F. Cochrane, "once from Central China southward, were Tai". 98

The Pan-hu were an important element among the population of an ancient State of the Karens. The earlier name of the State was Teru but in the later period it was referred to as Tsu (or Tch'iu). It developed from the eleventh century B.C. under the leadership of the Karens and at the end of the forth century B.C. it developed into a vast empire comprising the major part of South China down to about the border of Burma and a considerable portion of Central China including the larger part of Hunsen. Its dominions touched the sea in the

96 Iun-yu, VII, 1.
98 Hine and Cochrane : Shang at Home. (London), 1910, p. 3.
cast with the States of Ngu and Yueh forming part of them. In size the Karen empire of Tsu (Ch'ua) became equal, if not more, to the grand Chinese Confederation of the time and later to Ch'in, the most formidable rival of Tsu. The Karens of Teru drove to the south the King tribes from around the Tungting lake in Hunan between the Yang-tse-Kiang, the Han river and southwards and conquered that part of the country. These tribes are represented by the modern Khyens (Hiu or Shu) of Burma. The Karens in large numbers - some 200,000 families - were expelled from South China via Yang-chang in Western Yunnan to Burma in A.D. 773 by Ko-lo-feng, the powerful king of Nan-Chao when he destroyed the western part of the Tsuan State in northern Kwang-si. Khiiao or Kihtou tribes of Kwei-tchou, whose dialects have a great affinity with those of the Karens of Burma, are supposed to be Karens.

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

100 T. de Lacouperie: ibid., xlvii.
101 Ibid. xlvii and xlviii.
Who were the Chou? The Chou dynasty sprang from Chou, a principality in central Shan-si, in the valley of the Wei, on the western frontier of the then China. The Chou supremacy (circa 1122-249 B.C.) in China, though disturbed by constant warfare, marked an epoch of great cultural progress, which towards the close of the Chou rule, resulted in a synthesis of different cultures, Chinese and non-Chinese, that had existed side by side among the races living around the central seat of civilization. According to Eberhard the results of recent researches indicated that the Chou (as distinguished from Chao, a Tai people) were originally a Turkish tribe with their small realm with Turkestan and Tibetan populations. The Chou culture was closely related to that of Tang Chao. But the Chou had bronze weapons and war-chariots, going to repeated "barbarian" incursions the Chau capital had to be transferred during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. from the Wei valley to Loyang, near the present Honan-fu, in the east. The Eastern Chou, possibly because of comparative security and peace, made a great progress in arts and philosophy which is comparable to that of the Greeks of the age of Plato and Aristotle. It was at this time that the "Chinese" language took its form and the "Chinese society", properly so called, was born in which the conquerors formed the ruling aristocracy and the conquered population the working classes with the peasantry as the most numerous and important group. All the changes that followed in the later periods were the results of internal development rather than of external influence.
In the seventh century B.C., the China of the Eastern Chou split up into five contending feudal States, which were Chi in the North-east in parts of Shantung and Hopei; Chin in the North in the modern Shensi, Ch'in (Ts'in) in the West in the modern Shensi, Sung on the central plain and Ch'u (T'su) in Hubei in the South. These States entered into a long-drawn war of attrition each fighting for establishing its own supremacy over the others with temporary hegemony of one State or the other. After a prolonged struggle, Ch'in\textsuperscript{103} and Ch'\textsuperscript{u}\textsuperscript{104} survived as

\textsuperscript{103} The Ch'in (Ts'in) State was originally a small territory in the province of K'an-an. The eighth Emperor, Hau-wang (922-895 B.C.) of Western Chou, in the second year of his reign, assigned to Fei-Tse, a scion of a family of cattle breeders, who earned a reputation of being an excellent trainer of horses for chariot regiments, the territory of Ch'in to be held as a vassal state. Thus the Ch'in State first appeared in 998 B.C., in Kansu with Fei-Tse as its first prince. Li-Wang, the tenth emperor (879-870 B.C.) added to the state of Ch'in more than half of Shensi. With this acquisition of new territory, Ch'in rapidly developed into a powerful State and ranked among the twelve powerful feudal States of the time. In 249 B.C., Ch'in flourished as a unified empire with thirty-six great divisions, each ruled by a prince. In that year, the thirty-sixth prince of Ch'in founded the Ch'in Dynasty and reigned under the title of Shih-Yang-Ti and the country since then has been known to the world as China. - Montrakul: op. cit., pp. 22, 33-39; James Legge, Chinese Classics, vol. V, Part I, Clause xiv, 'The Princes of Ts'in,' pp. 110-11. A great part of the population of Ch'in, including the ruling class, was not purely Chinese but contained an admixture of Turks and Tibetans. The Chinese writers even dubbed Ch'in as a 'barbarian State'. Yet the name China has been derived from Ch'in with which the non-Chinese peoples from Central Asia first came into contact and called the country, conquered by Ch'in, China which became Sinas in Latin.

104 Ch'u (Ts'ou, Tch'\textsuperscript{u} or Tso) "appears to have been almost entirely non-Chinese in race, originally non-Chinese in speech, and partly so in culture." - Lattourette: op. cit., p. 47. According to T. de Lacouperie, "it developed itself from the eleventh century B.C., under the influence of a branch of an intrusive race, the Karen." In the early part of its development it was known as T'ao or T'n, Ch'u being the modern name. - T. de Lacouperie: op. cit., xlvi.
rivals, the former establishing its dominance over the States of the North and the latter expanding in the South. In the fourth century B.C., Ch’in annexed Shu in Western Sze-Chuan and Ch’in forces successfully crossed the Yang-tse-Kiang in 279 B.C., occupying a belt in the South. Thus the struggle between Ch’in and Ch’u, the two giant States with their satellites joining this side or that in their shifting alliance, resulted ultimately in the destruction of Ch’u in 224 B.C. The fall of the strong rival made it easier for the Chinese imperialism to grow with rapid strides. The victory of the Ch’in over Ch’u was mainly due to the organizational superiority of the Ch’in army. It had been reformed on new lines largely replacing the traditional chariot by cavalry and foot soldiers.

In this connection it may be pointed out that the essentially Karen State of Ten was later transformed into a predominantly Tai State with the flower of the Pang or Pan-hua race constituting its hard core and refusing doggedly to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Chinese. They not only put up a stubborn resistance to the aggressive policy of expansion of the northern power, but also progressively extended their territories by subjugating a score of other neighbouring States in the south. The dominion of the Ch’u State even extended beyond Yunnan to northern Burma and included what was then called the Tien or Tsan (Hsen) kingdom, which was destined to become the third great seat of power for the Tai after Ch’u. The first invasion of Burma by the Taroks from the north-east in the sixth century

105 Cochrane in Milne and Cochrane: op.cit., p. 5.
of the political expansion of Ch'u from the seventh century B.C.

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

The Chinese Empire, founded by Shih-Wang-Ti

106 The name Ch'in or Ta'in had found its mention, according to many oriental scholars, in the form of China in the laws of Manu, in the Mahabharata and in Kautilya's Arthasastra, before the foundation of the 'Chinese Empire'. Later the foreign travellers, who visited China, spread reports of the wealth and extent of the country which was variously designated as Sin, China, Sinae, China, Seres (from silk), and subsequently Cathay (from K'ital, corrupted from the tribal name K'it'en Tartars). It is supposed that "Sinim" of Isaiah refers to the same country.


107 Shih-Wang-Ti, often written as Shih-Hwang-Ti or Shih-Huang-Ti, occupied the thirty-sixth place in succession in the list of Princes of Ch'in State. He overthrew the Chou dynasty and united the different divisions of the Empire under his sway. He founded the Ch'in dynasty with his capital at Hsien-Yang in Shen-si. He abolished the old Feudal System and reorganized the Empire with thirty-six territorial divisions or Provinces with a Prefect in each. Wang means Emperor and Ti also means Emperor. He claimed that his own virtues were comparable to San Wang, that is, China's three mythical Emperors, who were Divine Emperors and his services were equal to Wu, the five virtuous Emperors, namely, 1. Hwang-Ti (Circ. 2697-2596 B.C.), 2. Tuan-Yok (Circ. 2612-2435 B.C.), 3. Yao (Circ. 2577-2256 B.C.), 4. Shun (Circ. 2255-2206 B.C.) and 5. Yu (Circ. 2205-2198 B.C.). Hence he called himself both Wang and Ti. - Boontrakul: op.cit., p. 56.
(249-210 B.C.), included large tracts of country south of the Yang-tse-Kiang, but the Chinese authority could not always be effectively exercised over the southern territories because of their distance from the capital and the violently rebellious spirit of the 'southern barbarians' who were generally Tai. Under Shi-Wang-Ti's ruthless policy of expansion the Tai suffered untold miseries, particularly those in the Tai State of Lo in Hunan, and Tai scholarship met with virtual extinction. He suppressed confucianism and caused indiscriminately men of letters to be buried alive and the valuable ancient writings destroyed. He abolished the old feudal system. One of the reasons given by scholars for his action against the ancient literature and the men of letters of his time was that they supported the feudal ideas. Whatever may be the reason the Tai scholars and their writings suffered irreparable loss at the hands of the Emperor who wanted to suppress ideas by suppressing literatures and writers.

Great masses of Tai population, as also other barbarian groups, fled from their homes in Hunan and the neighbouring provinces to escape the oppressions of the Emperor, some taking shelter in the hills and others migrating to distant countries in the south. Those who refused to leave their hearth and home, were always waiting for opportunities to throw off the Chinese yoke. The Han (206 B.C. - A.D. 264) extended their suzerainty of a nominal character over Yunnan and Kwangsi, but it was costly to maintain it. Rebellions were of frequent occurrence in those parts of the Empire, to which there was
almost incessant fighting, at times, with heavy losses and defeats for the Imperialists. For the maintenance of political stability, however weak, in the southern frontier regions of the Empire, to which the Tai had been pressed, the Chinese government had to recognise the indigenous Chiefs and confer on them Chinese titles of office and seals in addition to their native dignity. For instance, in the latter part of the fifth century A.D., a Tai potentate of the Pen-hu race was recognized as the king of Siang-Yang in Hupeh and Governor of Kingtchou (in Southern Hupeh) by the Emperor of China. His realm, containing about 80,000 villages, covered the provinces of Central China and extended northwards to the neighbourhood of the Yellow River. 

Professor Terrien de Lacouperie, from his penetrating study of the development of early Chinese polity, rightly observes that "under the cover of Chinese titles and geographical names, large regions occupied by populations entirely non-Chinese were included as homogeneous parts of the nation, with the effect of concealing the real weakness of the Chinese Empire previous to the last few centuries". Thus the greatness of China is not all Chinese; it can be equally claimed by other ancient races, such as the Turks, the Karens and the Tai that had lived in that vast sub-continent in the past and developed their culture and civilization.

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