CHAPTER III
RISE AND FALL OF THE MAN-CHAO EMPIRE

From very early times Yunnan was called by the Chinese 'the Land of the Hsi-nan', meaning thereby the land of the 'southern barbarians', and its inhabitants were contemptuously referred to as 'ungovernable vermin'. Rejecting the very high antiquity of the term Hsi-nan, about 2200 B.C., as shown in some Chinese records of a much later date, we may safely assume that for many centuries before Christ the tribes of the south, the Tai in particular, were called Hsi-nan by the Chinese. At a later date, about 225 B.C., the Chinese used to refer to them as F'u-jen dropping the earlier term meaning 'vermin', but they always regarded them as 'ungovernable'. Other names for them were Tien-jen (men of Tien or Yunnan) and later Lu-chao (inhabitants of Nan-Chao). 1 According to CHIU-T'ANG-SHU, "formerly their chiefs were six; hence their name Lu-chao. 2 Yunnan, too, was known by many different names in different periods, such as Nan-Chao, Hao-t'ao, Lung-Wei ('Dragon's tail'), Chu-mieh, and Yang-chien. 3 Under the ancient Chou dynasty (c. 1122-255 B.C.) Yunnan was called Shan-tsan. Only the name Shan-tsan is known without any account of its rulers.

3 Ibid, p. 108.
In the last part of the Chou period, somewhere between 280 and 255 B.C., the Emperor sent an expedition to the south under General Chuan Chao for the conquest of Sze-chuan and for exploring the regions along the river Yang-tse-kiang. The General marched up to the shores of the Yun-nan Lake (Tien Chih) in eastern Yun-nan and then wanted to return. But his road had been blocked by troops engaged in a war at the time between two neighbouring States. He, therefore, stopped and proclaimed himself king of the conquered territories calling it Tien kuo (kingdom of Tien). The dynasty he thus founded is known as Tien dynasty. Western Yun-nan, with Tali as capital, was then ruled by kings having legendary connection with India.

To the Chinese "Nan-Chao barbarians were originally a sort of Wu Man ('Black Barbarians') tribe. These barbarians call their king Chao. They claim to be descendants of the Ngai Lao. For generations they dwelt in Meng-She-Chou and were chieftains there." 4 "Black Barbarians" were so called, as pointed out by Rev. Cochrane, because of the Tai habit of wearing black garments. 5 The Ahoms had the same habit in the earlier period of their rule in Assam. 6 It has no reference to their complexion which is definitely fair everywhere. Meng-She-Chao was one of the six small kingdoms or Chaos of Yun-nan

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5 Milne and Cochrane : op.cit., p. 12.
6 During Suhumpha's rule (1497-1539), the people of Ga'ur were struck to see the terrible looking black-dressed Ahoms on the bank of the Karatoya - Assam Burenji, ed. by S.K. Bhuyan, 1945, Shillong, p.23.
and was the southernmost of these kingdoms.\textsuperscript{7} Meng-She was, according to Chia Tan's \textit{itinerary}, the original Nan-Chao ("the Chao on the south"). Pelliot says that it was on the site of the present village of Ku-Ch'eng, 15 li north of Meng-hue.\textsuperscript{8} Parker says that Meng-She was the ancient seat of the Meng family of Nan-Chao rulers. Scott believes that Meng-She is the modern Mangshih, called by the Shans Mong Hkawn.\textsuperscript{9} Nan-Chao represented the southernmost limit in the direction of Burma reached by the Sino-Tai cultural influence.

From A.D. 230 until A.D. 649 western Yun-nan remained divided into six separate States, known in history as "the Six Kingdoms of Nan-Chao", governed by their hereditary princes called "Chaos". They were under Chinese suzerainty. In A.D. 649 the king of Ai-Lao, Chiang-le-chin, abdicated in favour of Prince Meng-Siu-lo, a member of the Meng (Mung or Tai) family.\textsuperscript{10} He was the most powerful of the six Chaos or Princes and his kingdom was called Meng-She. At that time eastern Yun-nan was a Chinese territory under a Prefect of the Chang family whose head-quarters were at Chien-ning or I-Chou (the present Kun-ming city). Prince Siu-lo married a daughter of the Prefect. The Chinese annals say that in A.D. 650 the Tai rebelled and defeated the Chinese.\textsuperscript{11} This was

\textsuperscript{8} BFE, 0, 1904, p. 369, n. 2; vide JBRS, vol. XIV, Pt. II, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{9} GUES, 1.I, p. 264.
\textsuperscript{11} Sarasa: \textit{op.cit.}, p. 11.
probably the triumph of Si-nu-lo in his process of consolidating the Tai power by uniting the petty principalities of Western Yünnan.

He was succeeded in A.D. 674 by his son Lo-Sing-Yen, who reigned for about thirty-eight years without any notable event. His son Sing-lo-pi came to the throne in A.D. 712. He rendered very important services to the T'ang Emperor, Yuan-Chung, for which the latter was pleased to invest him with a territory in southern Szechuan and to confer upon him the princely rank of Tai-Ting-Wang. In the history of the "six kingdoms of Hsüan-Chao" the most revolutionary event was the rise of a single powerful kingdom by the unification of all the six separate kingdoms in A.D. 738. The author of this historic achievement was Meng-Kui-Yi, son of the Tai-Ting-Wang Sing-lo-pi. He assumed the name of Pi-lo-lo and succeeded to his father's throne in A.D. 728 at the age of thirty-one. He was an ambitious prince who wanted to unify under him the six kingdoms into one by means fair or foul. But he apprehended that the suzerain power might intervene in the event of a major conflict arising in an attempt to accomplish it. He therefore secretly obtained the co-operation of a high Chinese official named Wong, who was stationed at Ch'ien-C'wan-fu in Szechuan, in the matter. He seems to have suggested to the Emperor through this official how it would be of greater advantage to the Imperial Government to have to deal with only one ruler instead of six in that remote part of the empire and how one ruler over the whole territory would maintain peace better than
several rival princes. The Emperor must have appreciated the idea as he gave his sanction for the proposed unification of the country. It is not known, however, what means he had suggested in his approach to the Emperor to secure that end.

Prince Pi-lo-ko then planned a coup d'état. He invited his five royal neighbours with their sons to join him at Meng-hua (Meng-cha-tsing) on the 24th day of the 6th Moon of the year A.D. 731 in offering sacrifices to the spirits of their ancestors and to participate in the sacrificial feast. But the invitations aroused suspicion in the minds of some of the Princes. Prince Li-chiang, a Na-khi, refused the invitation. Prince Urtsen of Ten-C'wan-chew accepted the invitation after a good deal of hesitation. His wife Ts'i-Shan, a woman of extraordinary beauty and intelligence, suspected evil intention on the part of the host and therefore requested her husband to put on his sword-proof amulet as a precaution against any act of treachery while going to attend the function. The function was deliberately held in a large hall made of inflammable pitch pine. The Princes and their sons met and performed the sacrifices. When the rituals were over the royal guests were all entertained with a feast in the hall and were made dead drunk. After dark, while the Princes were still in that condition, Pi-lo-ko put armed guards all around the compound and set fire to the hall. Four of the Princes and their sons perished in the flames. The fifth Prince was later subdued.

Having thus eliminated the Princes and their sons by a single stroke of policy he quickly proceeded to annex
their kingdoms and also to take into his harem the royal widows except Tai-Shan, who refused to submit. He then sent troops to capture her, but she escaped the indignity by swallowing poison. The place, where she committed suicide, is now called Ten-rien-cen, which is 20 li north-east of Ten-c'wan-chew. G.W. Clark informs us that both these historic events are even to-day celebrated annually by the local people. On the 24th day of the 6th Moon each year the people in the district round Ta-li celebrate what is known as "He-pa-chieh" or Firebrand Feast in commemoration of the great tragedy of the Princes.

The Tai prince Pi-lo-ko of Meng-She may thus be called the founder of what later became known in history as the kingdom of Nan-Chao. The combined territory, over which Pi-lo-ko became the unrivalled monarch, was first called Ta-meng-kuo (Great Mung-Kingdom) in A.D. 738. The name Ta-meng-kuo was changed into Nan-Chao-kuo (kingdom of Nan-Chao) in A.D. 794 when Emperor Teh-Chung of the T'ang dynasty conferred upon Yi-men-sin, son and successor of Ko-ko-feng, the title of Nan-Chao-Wang (Emperor of Nan-Chao). Pi-lo-ko transferred his capital from Meng-She to the rich and well-protected plains of Ta-li and built it at Tai-Ho-Tsheng. 12 3 Kilometres

12 'Taheng' is said to be Chinese translation of the Tai word Tshiach (Chieng), which means a fortified town. Now with the decay of this old capital the place is called Tai-Ho-Tsun-Tsun meaning in Chinese a village.
south of Ta-li, between the shores of Erh Hai and the Tien Tshang Shan range. His main consideration in selecting Ta-li was its great strategic value. In A.D. 739 some of the Man-tai tribes rebelled but Prince Pi-lo-ko soon reduced them to submission. With some of these tribesmen he visited the Imperial capital. Emperor K'ai uien (?) or probably Huang Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, who ruled from A.D. 713 to 755, "received him very graciously, bestowed high titles upon him, gave him many presents, and requested him to build many cities in his kingdom". After returning from the Chinese capital Pi-lo-ko used his Man-tai prisoners to build the city of Tai-Ho. He also built a number of other cities including Ta-li-fu and Hsia and Shan Kwaus, calling them Long-tou and Leng-wi, that is, the dragon's head and tail. In A.D. 740 two cities of his kingdom Ch'ien-ch'wan-lau-kong and Yung-chang-fu fell into the hands of a rebel leader named Meu-Chao, but Pi-lo-ko crushed the rebellion and recaptured the cities.

In A.D. 745, during the reign of the sixth T'ang Emperor, Ming-Ti, Pi-lo-ko entered into a new treaty with China. This second treaty, which was perhaps necessitated by the expiry or violation of the old one, guaranteed security of Nan-Chao on the Chinese side. Pi-lo-ko thus became free to deal with the troublesome Tibetans. He then launched a war on Tibet and succeeded in seizing several cities.

Though for Pi-lo-ko end seems to justify the means and he set such an example by committing the dastardly act of

15 Credner : ibid, p.5.
assassinating the princes of the neighbouring states and annexing their territories, either at the instigation or connivance of the Emperor, yet he proved to be a great builder and a great king by accomplishing the unification of the hitherto weak and petty states within a very brief space of time. It seems he acted with a vision and preferred to make a short cut to its realization. His great object was undoubtedly to consolidate the Tai power at the Dragon's tail by welding together the small rival kingdoms and the opportunity for this task he created by the policy of promoting friendship with China. Pi-lo-ko's achievement created a great impression on the mind of the Emperor, who was then pleased to appoint Pi-lo-ko's son as a general of the imperial army for the southern defence with head-quarters at Meng-hua.

The unification of Nan-Chao, then called Ta-Meng-Kuo, (The Great Mung Kingdom) under Pi-lo-ko was the first great step towards the development of that kingdom into a rival empire of China. The administrative system of the kingdom, as at the time of Pi-lo-ko's death, reached a high degree of efficiency, so much so that it was supposed to be better organized with its numerous departments than any that contemporary Europe had. The king had a Council of eight Ministers to manage the civil and military affairs of the State. Legislation was one of the functions of the Ministers. For directing and supervising the works of the various departments there were nine Executive Officers, a President over the mandarins, an officer for the Census, Military Instructors, Judges, Commissioners of Works and of the Board of Trade, three officers
in charge of the government granaries, one Superintendent of Horses, One Superintendent of Cattle, a Commander-in-Chief, a Commissariat Officer and eight Prefects; and two Brigadier-Generals, one stationed at Hwa-li-ch'ee Si-l'wein and the other at Tong-hai-hsien. There were thirty-five military officers in command of troops, stationed at various strategic centres east of Ta-li, but only two such officers west of the city. Provisions were made for rewarding persons for acts of bravery and rendering distinguished services to the State. Rewards were generally gifts of gorgeous clothes. Thus the whole system was based upon well-developed principles of government.

Such division of responsibility and the task of coordination of the affairs of so many departments are themselves a great practical limitation upon the royal power. To be used to such a system itself virtually transforms an absolute monarchy into a limited one. In fact, the Tai monarchy of Nan-Chao was based on an unwritten principle of checks and balances and the king was often elected by the subjects. Administrative features, such as these, reflect an enlightened idea of government as distinguished from the rule of the tribal chieftains. There is no evidence to show that the king ever claimed to rule by divine right. In the later period, however, the Nan-Chao rulers professed Buddhism and under the influence of that religion the legend grew that the reigning dynasty of the kingdom was descended from Asoka.

The relation between Imperial China and Nan-Chao was

one of friendship between two great powers with the difference that the latter had to acknowledge, as a formality, the suzerainty of the former. The government of Nan-Chao was, on that account, not a subordinate branch of the government of China. The relations of the other non-Chinese southern States to the Empire were also more or less the same. These southern rulers used to pay friendly visits to the Imperial Court in recognition of the latter's superior dignity and receive from the Emperor honours, titles and presents. At most, the imperial government of China would sometimes send a Resident to supervise the affairs of these rulers and to report on them from time to time. In spite of Nan-Chao being a potential danger, China's interest lay in ensuring her goodwill and co-operation towards China for the maintenance of political stability in the so-called southern dominions. In the event of any great disturbance, such as a rebellion, the imperial government would despatch armed forces for quelling the same and enforcing loyalty to the Emperor. In those early days of difficult communication, it was never possible for China to maintain any effective control over these border States lying, as they did, at a great distance from the imperial head-quarters. China had therefore to be contented with the exercise of nominal suzerainty over them. But whenever an Emperor happens to be a man of weak character, intolerant, capricious and blood-thirsty, rebellions break out in the Empire and, in these circumstances, where possible, the Chinese suzerainty is overthrown by the non-Chinese vassal rulers, causing, at times, a change of the Chinese ruling dynasty itself.
It may also be noted that these native rulers were no less benefited from the existence of the Empire. But for the imperial supervision, however nominal, and the constant possibility of armed intervention by that authority, conflicts between the rival States of the south would have been more frequent with still worse consequences. On the other hand, the same lack of effective control over these States on the part of the imperial government was a large opportunity for any ambitious and enterprising prince to embark upon a career of conquest and empire-building. Prince Pi-lo-ko of the State of Meng-she actually played such a role to augment his power and expand his kingdom.

Pi-lo-ko died in A.D. 748 and his son, Ko-lo-feng, succeeded to the throne at the age of thirty-six. W.W. Cochrane, who mastered well the Shan language and studied the history of the race, says that Ko-lo-feng is but the Chinese corruption of the Tai name Khun-Lu-Tung or Khun-Luang-Tung (meaning Lord Lu the Glorious). He made T'ai-Ho his residence. T'ai-Ho means 'great peace' in Chinese. According to Yang-tsai's narrative, the Emperor Tien-pao, probably Hsuan-Tsong (A.D. 712-56), the greatest T'ang Emperor of China, sent Li-ku-i-hh to install him as

15 According to some writers A.D. 749.
16 Some say that he was an adopted son.
17 Shan K an n Home, p. 9 ; Credner : Cultural and Geographical Observations etc., Bangkok, 1930, p. 6.
18 GUB3S, I.1, p. 265.
"King of Nan-Chao". By promoting friendship with the Chinese, he first incorporated a number of southern Ngai-Lao principalities with his kingdom and attacked and defeated the Tufan or Turfan (Tibetans) whose territorial ambitions were a threat to both western China and Nan-Chao. But once in A.D. 751, while Prince Ko-lo-feng was on a journey with his wife to pay a visit to General Li-mi, he received complaints from the people of his kingdom that two Chinese officers, probably neighbouring Governors, named Chang and Chia, had been behaving in a most impudent and offensive manner towards the people of Nan-Chao. According to another account, King Ko-lo-feng paid a visit to China, where he was insulted by the Governor of Hunan. The Governor mentioned here might be one of the above two Governors, probably Governor Chang. Ko-lo-feng immediately sent Captain Yang as his personal envoy to report the matter to the Chinese Emperor, but the latter discourteously refused to listen to the charge. At this the Nan-Chao king felt himself further humiliated. So he himself proceeded to take strong action against the Chinese Governors. He despatched an armed force under General Wang to punish Chang, the chief offender. In the engagement that took place Chang was badly defeated but escaped being made a prisoner by poisoning himself to death.

When this news reached the imperial capital, the Emperor ordered an expedition of 80,000 troops under Generals

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19 Li-pi according to Credner.
20 Sarasae; op.cit., p. 12.
Suen and Chang against Ko-lo-feng. The advance of this large arm}y at first frightened Ko-lo-feng. So he made overtures to the imperial Generals for peace even by acknowledging his fault, but the latter paid no heed to his appeals and entered Yun-nan with a revengeful attitude. Ko-lo-feng made his last appeal to settle the matter by negotiation and with that object sent two officers to the Chinese Generals offering peace proposals, but the latter sent the two officers as prisoners to the Emperor.

When all attempts at peace failed, Ko-lo-feng resolved to fight and despatched his son Fung-cia-inh and his redoubtable General Twan with a strong force against the imperial army, of which General Li-Kwang-Pi (perhaps Li-Pi as mentioned above) was the Commander-in-Chief. In A.D. 751, a great battle was fought near Hsia-Kwan on the route which, coming from the east, passes along the south shore of Erh-Hai (the Ta-li lake). The Chinese suffered disastrous reverses, with 60,000 of their troops being killed. It is said in the accounts that Ko-lo-feng then caused an enormous pit to be dug as a grave (a "wang sai-fen" or myriad tomb) in which the dead Chinese troops were buried. The inscription by the side of this grave reads: "The Tomb of the Chinese". This grave is still to be seen near the east entrance to the market city of Hsia-Kwan.

21 Credner: op.cit., p. 6.
22 JSS, vol. XI, Pt. II, 1932, p. 19; see also Latourette: The Chinese: Their History and Culture (New York, 1945), p.188.
After this victory Ko-lo-feng styled his kingdom the 'Great Meng Empire'. He also caused a marble slab to be engraved with the reasons which drove him to revolt. M. Emile Rocher first made mention of this tablet in his History of Yun-nan. Professor Dr. Wilhelm Gredner has given in his monograph the photo of this Memorial Tablet taken by Yet-kui in A.D. 766 in July, 1930. It was set up by Ko-lo-feng to commemorate his victory over the Chinese army at Shia-Kwan (Hsia-Kwan) in the year 751. The inscription was drawn up by Ch'en-hwei and engraved on the marble slab by U-shih. This tablet of stone is probably the largest in south China. M. Carthew informs us that this stela is still to be seen "on the road from Hsia-Kwan to Ta-li about 8 li from Hsia-Kwan on the west side of the road". The tablet has fallen and now lies on its side. It is engraved on both sides and many characters can still be deciphered. The local name for it is Mau-chow-pei, which means the Tablet of the southern Princes.

Hsuan Teung lived to witness the decline of the prestige of Chinese arms in the far-off south for the first time. The inscription on the Tablet, among others, contains the following statement: "My predecessors, generation after generation, submitted to China, and were repeatedly given titles and presents. My successors are permitted to revert to China. If a Chinese envoy should arrive, they can point to this stone

23 Meng or Mung being a Tai family to which Ko-lo-feng belonged.
Tablet and purge my crime. It is reproduced in translation by Cochrane in his account of "The Northern Shans". 25

Cochrane has not mentioned in what language the inscription but Reginald Le May says that it was written in Chinese. Cochrane says that the submission to China by Ko-lo-feng's predecessors does not mean subjugation, but only a friendly understanding with the Empire.

The T'ang Emperor Hsuan Tsung (or Hsing Huang), the great contemporary of Ko-lo-feng, held the throne from A.D. 712 to 755. During his reign the T'ang Empire reached the zenith of its power. On the west, his great General Kao-Hsien-chih of Korean extraction pushed the frontiers of the Empire as far as the Upper Oxus valley in the north and the Upper Indus valley in the south in A.D. 747 and broke the strength of the Arabs and the Tibetans in that region bringing under Chinese suzerainty the local chiefs including the Indian princes then ruling in the Indus valley. 26 Kao Hsien-chih's expedition would remain a great landmark in the Annals of Chinese conquests. It not only proved the technical superiority of Chinese arms; but also enhanced greatly the prestige of the Empire among the races of Central Asia.

Emperor Hsuan Tsung was also known far and wide as a great promoter of music and culture. At Ch'angan, he founded an institution of music and culture called Hanlin Yuan to which scholars, musicians, magicians and even jugglers from all over Asia were drawn. Membership of

26 Latourette, op. cit., p. 187.
Hanlin Yuan was a literary honour for a person. Ch'angan was then the new T'ang capital, which had been established by Kao Tseu, the first ruler of the dynasty (A.D. 618-26), not far from the site of the Ch'angan of the Han. Hauan Tsung also founded a school for the teaching of music. It is recorded in the ancient Manipuri Chronicle that the Manipuri king Nao-Thing-Thing (or Nao-Thing-Thong), who then acknowledged the suzerainty of Nan-Chao under Ko-lo-feng, sent a well-trained party of dancers, singers and instrumental musicians to the Imperial Court of China as a goodwill mission. It must have been a mission to Hauan Tsung's Court.

But by A.D. 751 the Empire showed signs of decline. In that year Kao Hsien-chih suffered a bad defeat at the hands of the Arabs north of Ferghana. Thereafter in West China the imperial authority began to crumble down, with the result that a large part of the West Chinese dominion passed into the hands of two Turkish peoples, the Karluks in the west and Uigurs in the north and east. At the same time the Khitans (Ch'i-tan) from southern Manchuria carried depredations.


W. Shaw writes from Manipuri sources 'In 707 A.D. the king of Thailand defeated the Manipuri King, Nao-Thing-Thong, which is a Kuki name. After that Manipur was ruled by the Thais for 10 years'. (See W. Shaw's article 'The Manipuries' in Eastern Sentinel, June 17, 1959, p.4). Since there was no independent Thai kingdom in Thailand in that early period the reference is apparently to Ko-lo-feng's conquest of Upper Burma and Assam including Manipur in the eighth century A.D. as described in the T'ang history.
into the plains of north China. In the south the Tai Emperor Ko-lo-feng won a decisive victory over the Chinese thereby ending all vestiges of Chinese suzerainty over Nan-Chao.

But Ko-lo-feng felt that with a hostile China on the north his position was not secure. He therefore wanted to have a new ally against China. He knew that the Tibetans were remembering the injury done to them by China in A.D. 747. He therefore thought it expedient to make a treaty of alliance with the Tu’fan (the Tibetans), his former enemy. He thus threw in his lot with them. The Great Lama of Tibet was pleased to confer upon Ko-lo-feng a seal and the title of btsampö-chung (i.e. "Younger brother Gyalbo") which means ruler equal to the ruler of Tibet, but in rank next to the Great Lama and addressed him as Tung-Ti (the Emperor of the East). The Great Lama never recognizes anybody on earth as his Elder owing to the Tibetan belief that they are senior to all other races and their country is the cradle of mankind.

Two years after the historic defeat at Hsiia-Kwan the T'ang Emperor Tien-pao (Hsuan Tsung), under the pressure of internal problems, resorted to a conciliatory and persuasive policy towards Nan-Chao, then a powerful adversary of the Empire. He sent to Ko-lo-feng "Commissioners Ih and Lo with costly embroidered silk robes and various presents, styled him brother and gave him a gold seal. He also sent robes to Fung-cia-ih and made him a general." 28 As subsequent events

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proved, the Emperor had to take recourse to this policy of temporary appeasement just to gain time to prepare for a mightier blow to be dealt on Nan-Chao so as to bring that country under his heels. For in A.D. 755, an army of about a hundred thousand imperial troops under Generals Li and Ho came to chastise Ko-lo-feng. But, as if under Heaven's decree, a pestilence broke out in the Chinese camp taking a heavy toll of life from among the troops. The rest, after making a feeble attack on the capital, fled away leaving almost all their arms and treasures behind.

Waiting for the pestilence to subside the Emperor made the last biggest attempt to efface from the map the existence of Nan-Chao. This time a larger force from China came down upon Nan-Chao and a great battle took place. The whole imperial army was routed by two reputed generals of Nan-Chao, named Fung-cia-ih and Twan, the former being Ko-lo-feng's son. In the estimation of Chinese historians the losses of the imperial armies in their various campaigns against Nan-Chao were not less than 2,000,000 men. In A.D. 765 Fung-cia-ih built the city of Yun-nan-fu to strengthen the eastern defence of the Nan-Chao empire. It is said that the walls of this city still stood in A.D. 1383 when the city was rebuilt.

In the meantime, Ko-lo-feng strengthened his position by making friendship with Tibet and subjugated the neighbouring countries including parts of Burma and Assam. He also wrested large portions of Chinese territory. China, with all her vast army and resources, could not stop the progress of Ko-lo-feng's work of empire-building. Emperor Hsuan Tsung, by his
costly wars and court extravagances, drained the country of its wealth to such an extent that there was widespread poverty and suffering among the people. China was seething with discontent everywhere and the people were revolting against the government. In the north-east a powerful rebellion was led by a Turk named An Lu-Shan in 755. He was an important military Commander of the Emperor. An Lu-Shan proclaimed himself emperor of a large part of China north of the Yellow river. This rebellion proved to be one of the major causes of the decline of the Empire under the T'ang. On the western frontier, the Tibetans appeared to be a great menace. Even the most reputed Chinese generals, Kuo-Tzu-i and Li-Kweng-Pi, could not defeat the Tibetans. The Emperor's scandalous character was no less responsible for his increasing unpopularity among his subjects. He even did not hesitate to take into his own chamber, in 738, the wife of one of his sons as his chief favourite. Now at an age above fifty he indulged in a life of extravagance and gayety under the influence of this young lady. He also offended his influential supporters by giving to the unworthy members of her family high offices and rank.

When China was thus beset with her serious domestic problems, Ko-lo-feng, shortly after 754, turned his attention to the countries lying to the west and south of his kingdom and by a powerful drive extended his sway over the Irrawaddy valley of Burma and also a large part of Assam. E.H. Parker, by his original research in the Chinese sources, has brought out the important fact that Nan-Chao in the eighth century A.D.
bordered on Magadha of India. During the dark centuries preceding the emergence of the powerful Nan-Chao State the original Ngai-Lao habitat was somewhere nearer Burma. These people in the later period spread towards the north-east from the Upper Mekong valley and founded the kingdom of Nan-Chao with Ta-li as its central city. Nan-Chao rapidly expanded under the powerful Tai monarch Ko-lo-feng, who, after his dynastic title, styled it 'the Great Meng Empire'. His successors in the ninth century A.D. further extended the empire towards the east and south-east right unto Tong-King, whose capital Hanoi was captured in A.D. 863 by a Nan-Chao invading army, probably when Prince Shi-leng (Tien-lung; A.D. 859-77) was the Nan-Chao emperor. Parker points out that on the east Nan-Chao adjoined the Tsuan; on the south-east it was connected with Chiao-chih (Tongking); on the west with Ho-Ch'ieh-t'o (magadha); on the north-west it joined on to Tu-fan (Tibet); on the south to Nu-wang, probably the Heip-Hsawng-Panna; on the south-west to P'iao or Pyu (Burma); on the north it reached I-chou; on the north-east it connected with Chien-ku. The king's capital was Yang-chu-mich city (Ta-li-fu). Another capital was Shan-Shan-Fu (Yun-nan-nan) 30.

In about the year A.D. 760 Ko-lo-feng annexed the country of the Pyu (Chinese P'iao) in Burma and also that of the Sun-chwan, which appears to have been an Assamese tribe. The Pyu, it is believed, belonged to the Tibetan stock and hence account for their eventual absorption by the Burmese. The Pyu

29 Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.121.
established themselves about the fifth century A.D. in Central Burma with their capital at Old Prome, now called Hmauzza, on the Irrawaddy, while the Mons were in possession of Lower Burma, but split up into two kingdoms, those of Thaton and Pegu. The Chronicles of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 606-918) describe Burma as containing eighteen States and nine walled towns, all dependent on the Pyu. The Pyu were Buddhist and cultured and used a kind of crescent-shaped gold and silver coins. Sri Ksetra (modern Hmauzza), some five miles south-east of Prome, is the only Pyu site as yet searched with any thoroughness. Reginald Le May says that one of the earliest finds, at a place called Maunggan near Hmauzza, consisted, inter alia, of gold plates, containing Buddhist texts in Pali, the script of which, Professor Finot says, is like the Kadamba script of Southern India of the fifth century A.D. The Pyu burnt their dead and stored up the ashes in urns. The urn inscriptions, as deciphered by Dr. Otto Magden, reveal that a Vikrama dynasty reigned at Sri Ksetra (now Hmauzza) from A.D. 673 to 718 and that it used Pyu script and language. The inscriptions mention three Vikrama rulers named Suriya Vikrama, Hari Vikrama and Siba (Simha) Vikrama. Suriya Vikrama died in A.D. 698 at the age of sixty-four. Hari Vikrama in A.D. 695 at the age of forty-one and Siba Vikrama in A.D. 718 at the age of forty-four. Hall points out that the dates are provisional, since the era is not stated. 31

Chinese works from the fourth century A.D. onwards refer to the wild and savage tribes south-west of Yung-Ch'ang among whom there were cannibals. The most dreaded among them were the Piu who tattooed their bodies, used bows and arrows and mostly went naked. Apart from other causes these tribes rendered the journey from India to China via Yung-Ch'ang by the ancient routes most hazardous. Beyond the tracts of these wild tribes, at a distance of some 3,000 li south-west of Yung-Ch'ang, were the Pyu. The Pyu were the earliest known inhabitants of Burma.\(^2\) The Pyu capital Sri Keatra existed in the seventh century A.D. and it was mentioned in that century by the Chinese pilgrims Hsuan-tsang\(^3\) and I-ting. The inscriptions left behind by the race appear to confirm the period during which it flourished in the kingdom of Sri Keatra. Ruined monuments of the city walls are still to be seen in the site. The Pyu capital was finally destroyed by Han-Chao in A.D. 832. But the Pyu came under Han-Chao much earlier when their seat in the region of Halin in Susebo district was annexed by Ko-lo-fang.

It is known from the Chinese sources that Prince Ko-lo-fang of Han-Chao subjugated the Pyu and the tribes of the Upper Irrawaddy valley shortly after A.D. 754 and thus he is said to have "opened communications with the Pyu". But the statement of the New Tang History is that "Han-Chao,

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\(^3\) Watters: I's Yuan Corahs.
on account of its military power and proximity, has always
held the Pyu under saddle and control. Ko-lo-feng also
built a fortress to maintain his domination over the tribes
living in the Irrawaddy valley. He used the Pyu and other
subjugated tribesmen as soldiers and labourers in the service
of his empire. When a century later the Nan-Chao Prince
Shi-long invaded Ko-sha (the modern Hanoi) and overran
Annam the Pyu were found to serve as soldiers in the Nan-Chao
army. It may be noted that during the period of the Han
Burmese was called 'T'ien' and in the T'ang period 'Piao' (Pyu). According to Lu a the Pyu-Nan-Chao frontier in A.D. 800 roughly
corresponded with the Sino-Burmese frontier of to-day in the
neighbourhood of Thamia. In order to make the communications
with the west secure Ko-lo-feng controlled the Upper Irrawaddy
valley and also a part of Lower Burma.

China, being unable any longer to maintain her
continued hold on the border territory near the Burma frontier,
abolished the Yung-Ch'eng prefecture in A.D. 342 with the

36 JES, vol. XII, Pt. I, 1902, p. 24. The old pro-
nunciation of P'iao, according to Keilgren (Analytic Dictionary,
727) was P'iao, in Cantonese P'iu = "The Ten and the Ngai-Lao"
in JRES, vol. XIV, Pt. II, p. 113. The kingdom of P'iao is
described by the Chinese writers of the tenth century as having
domains whose extent was 'nine hundred miles from east to
west'. Hallett points out that this statement must have 'in-
corporated the Kambora, Mau, and Laos Shan, and then would
be slightly in excess'. Further the population of the kingdom
is said to have included two hundred and ninety-eight
different tribes, who professed Buddhism. - Hallett : ibid.,
p. 338.
37 The Ancient Pyu", op. cit., p. 248.
result that the old China-Burma communication route was virtually closed and had remained so until Ko-lo-feng re-opened it by his conquest of Burma. During his reign ancient routes of communication were developed and comparatively safer journey ensured in this part of the Nan-Chao empire. The land route from China to India connecting the T'ang Court with the Pyu capital was opened mostly with the help of Pyu conscripts. Luce has pointed out that "its stages are given (Kia Tan)
in some detail by the Chinese minister Chia Tan at the end of the 8th century. One route led due west from Yang-Ch'ang to T'eng-Yueh, and thence approximately by Weimingmau (Li-chui town), Hogaung (Sp-hui town) and the Taza Gap to Gauhati (Kamrupa) and Magadha. The other went south-west from Yung-Ch'ang to the Pyu capital and so to Gauhati by the Chindwin and Manipur. It may be noted that Chia Tan produced a map of the world based on the geographical accounts obtained from the numerous pilgrims and tribute-bearers who visited the Chinese Court. In this connection it may be noted that Chavannes refers to a note of Hui-lin who points out that "The Tsang-ko (or old Ngai-lao in the extreme south-west of China) road was the shortest route from China to India, but

38 From the description of this route it is highly improbable that the route connected Prome, which is so far south in the map, and then led up to the Chindwin and Manipur. It is most likely that this earlier Pyu capital was Halin-gyi in Shwebo district where traces of the Pyu rule have been found.

40 Soothill : op.cit., p.45.
It was very dangerous; it passed the places Yu-yao, Yueh-chih, Pu-shi and Yang-Ch'ang. It thus gives the trace of the route eastward beyond Yang-Ch'ang.  

That there was an overland route from India to China across Upper Burma from very early times is indicated clearly in the Chinese accounts. In 122 B.C. (?), for instance, when General Chang Ch'ien 42 of Han Wu-Ti (140-87 B.C.) led an expedition to Ta-hsia (Takharistan) he saw in the markets of Bactria Shu cloth, undoubtedly Sze-chuan silk, and Chiung bamboo. He was told that these goods had come from south-east, from the Shen-tu kingdom (India). On enquiry he learnt that they had come from Yun-nan and Sze-chuan across Upper Burma by way of the Yun-nan-Burma border and northern India. 43 Pelliot holds it to be very probable that it is by

41 JHRG, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 139.
42 Chang Ch'ien (Chang-k'ien) was sent by the Han Emperor, Wu-Hi, as his envoy in 138 B.C. to contact the Yueh-chih and solicit their alliance against the common enemy, the Hsiung-nu (Huns) of whose growing power the Chinese were afraid. Already the Yueh-chih had been driven westward by the powerful Hsiung-nu (Hsiung-mu). Chang Ch'ien made two adventurous expeditions to the new abode of the Yueh-chih somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Oxus. On his way through Chinese Turkestan he was captured by the Hsiung-nu who held him in 'honourable captivity' for some ten years before he could escape with his men and proceed on his mission. Chang Ch'ien contacted the Yueh-chih but failed to obtain their alliance as they were 'tired of fighting and trekking' and now wanted a peaceful life. He was again captured by the Hsiung-mu on his way back to China and released after one year's captivity. He reached China in 126 B.C. This was also the first penetration of the Chinese into the Tarim basin.

43 Laufer means by Chiung bamboo walking sticks of the square bamboo which grows in north-east Yun-nan. He also gives the date of Chang Ch'ien's arrival in Bactria as 128 B.C.

this way that the Hindus gained their first knowledge of the Chinese world. Ta-hsia (Bactria) was anxious to communicate with China, but owing to the presence of the predatory Hsiung-nu tribes, who are said to have been Huns, direct overland trade route to the west could not be opened by China. Yet at the suggestion of Chang Ch'ien, Wu-Ti resorted to a caravan route via Tufan (Tibet), possibly to avoid contact with the Hsiung-nu, for exporting to Persia and Europe Chinese products such as silk fabrics, porcelain, precious minerals and other less bulky goods. But it must have been a very difficult and wearisome journey along such a route. It is believed that Chinese products first found their way to European markets from this time and China's trade with Bactria and Sogdiana rapidly grew with Kashgar as a convenient emporium. Chang Ch'ien also saw the advantage of opening a road to Ta-hsia via Sze-chuan and India. At his initiative a Chinese reconnoitring party was sent by the Emperor to Yun-nan for exploring this south-western route for commerce. The party advanced up to Tien (Yun-nan-fu) where the king Chang-Ch'iang of that country undertook to find them a route to the west. But his attempt failed and the Chinese exploration party, after waiting in K'un-ming for more than a year, had to return to the capital. The party, however, submitted a report to the Emperor on the lands and peoples they had seen in that journey and spoke well of Tien saying that it was a big country deserving friendship of the Han.

In view of this failure of China to find a way out to the west across south-west China it is doubtful whether the Chinese products had ever reached the markets of Bactria by an overland route through Burma and India. For long centuries preceding the Christian era south-west China was in occupation of the Tai and other barbarian tribes whom the Chinese could not effectively subjugate and for whom the road to India via Yunnan and Burma remained closed to China until the submission of the Ngai-Lao in A.D. 69 when it was possible for the Chinese to cross the Mekong for the first time and found the prefecture of Yang-Ch'iang, the headquarters of which lay east of the Salween, some sixty miles from the present Burma frontier. This extension of Chinese dominions opened up the earliest overland gateway to Burma and made it possible for Chu-ko-Liang in A.D. 226 to enter that country in pursuit of Meng-huo. Therefore, we know from I-tsing that at the end of the third century A.D., a batch of about twenty Chinese monks found their way, "by the Tsang-ko road in the province of Shu" to the court of Sri Gupta who founded the Gupta dynasty.

It may be noted that during the period from the end of the Han rule to the beginning of that of the Sui China was weakened by civil strife, internal divisions and foreign invasions. Civil strife ensued chiefly among the

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members of the royal family. The non-Chinese chiefs in the north, taking advantage of these domestic troubles of China, extended their conquests into Chinese territory and some even aspired to the title of Emperor. In the south a branch of the Ssu-ma family, known as the Eastern Chin, reigned precariously with its capital on the Yangtze in the site of the present Nan-king. Sze-chuan was dominated by a war-lord, named Huan Wen of the Eastern Chin. This period (A.D. 220-589) in China is also marked by a phase called the period of Six Dynasties, namely, the Wu, the Eastern Chin, the Liu Sung, the Southern Ch' i, the Liang and the Ch'i. Thus being seriously disabled under a process of disintegration China lost her control over most of the non-Chinese races that had been acknowledging her suzerainty. It was also during this period that she lost her hold on the Ngai-Lao in western Yun-nan which led to the ultimate abolition of Yung-Ch'ang Chum. For the next few centuries China virtually abandoned Yun-nan and the land-route through that country and, as is indicated by the Chinese sources, took to the sea-routes for communication with the west. 48

Again with the development of general communications and their comparative security under Ko-lo-feng in the eighth century A.D. it became possible for Buddhist missionaries to travel from the country of the Pyu to the capital of Nan-Chao by the overland routes. It should be remembered that Theravada

Buddhism of south India had a flourishing centre in Old Prome or Sriksetra, the capital of the Pyu. The spread of Buddhism among the Pyu from this centre is attested by the Pedi inscriptions and writings on gold plates, stones and a gold-leaf book discovered in Maungla between 1897 and 1926 and also by the existence of numerous Buddhist sculptures and ruined monuments dating from about the sixth century A.D. down to tenth century A.D. 49 The evidence of the T'ang annals also says referring to the Pyu that "they are Buddhists and have a hundred monasteries". 50 Yet the religious remains of this area are not unmixed, for numerous stone sculptures of Vishnu and bronze statues of Avalokitesvara and other Mahayanist Bodhisattvas have also been found. 51 The development of intercourse with the Pyu since Ko-lo-feng's reign led to a tremendous revival of Buddhism in Nan-Chao in A.D. 827 and the traditional Taoist religion lost royal patronage. Although Buddhism of the Great Vehicle had entered Yan-nan at a much earlier date it could not supplant the prevailing Taoist religion and the Dragon cult of that country, but when Ko-lo-feng's enterprise opened up the flood-gate to religious and cultural influences of India to come as a wave, their impact revolutionised the religious beliefs and social outlook of the peoples of Nan-Chao, and

50 Fakir: Burma with special reference to her relations with China, 1893, p. 12.
51 Fall: A History of South-east Asia, 1955, p. 121.
since that time Buddhism in its various mixed forms had continued to become the dominant religion of Yun-nan.

After a reign of thirty-two years Ko-lo-feng died in A.D. 778. He was the real builder of the Nan-Chao Empire. In him is seen a matchless combination of military prowess and unrivalled statesmanship, the twin foundations of strength that enabled him to withstand gloriously the mighty assaults of the Chinese Empire. The Chinese prestige was shattered in the trial of strength with this southern potentate and Nan-Chao came to stay with an enhanced pride as a second empire south of China for about four and a half centuries more.

While Ko-lo-feng was still reigning, his valiant son, Yong-ch'iech-i died. On Ko-lo-feng's death his grandson I-mou-hsun (Yi-Men-Sin) was installed as successor in A.D. 780. It is said that I-mou-hsun's mother belonged to the Taikin tribe. This young prince imbibed some of the qualities of his great predecessors. With his talents for rule he also combined an amount of learning. In his early age a wise man, named Ch'eng-lieu, a Chinese ex-magistrate, acted as his tutor. I-mou-hsun was a tactful and intelligent ruler, who conducted the affairs of the State with firmness and vigour like the great Ko-lo-feng.

After the assumption of royal power he made preparations to extend the empire by annexing the southern dominions of the T'ang. He raised an army of 30,000 men for the projected campaign. In this great undertaking he also secured the cooperation of the Tibetans, who had their designs on the frontier.

52 According to some writers A.D. 779.
tracts of the Empire. The allied forces then invaded the Chinese province of Shu (Sze-Chuan) but were repulsed with heavy losses by the Chinese. This major reverse at the very start curbed the ambition of I-mou-hsun to annex any part of the Chinese territory. The defeat also rendered the northern defences of Nan-Chao vulnerable to Chinese attack. In face of this situation I-mou-hsun had to transfer his Court from Tai-ho to Tsu-me further south in the neighbourhood of Ho-mein (Teng-Yueh). He was also advised by the wise Ch'eng-Hue to immediately negotiate with China for peace in order to ensure future security of the kingdom. As it was the only course of expediency at the moment I-mou-hsun accepted the advice and started negotiation with the Chinese Governor of Ch'eng-hi, named We Kao, for the restoration of the old good relation of Nan-Chao with the Empire.

But this policy of I-mou-hsun aroused great suspicion in the minds of the Tibetans, who had tried in vain to dissuade him from such a course. The Tibetans then started warlike preparations on the border territories of Nan-Chao. They established garrisons at all strategic points, raised levies on a war footing and collected imposts from the people. Apprehending danger from such activities of the erstwhile ally I-mou-hsun addressed a note to Governor We Kao apprising him of the ominous developments on the Tibetan frontier and requested him for a joint action against them. He also suggested that the Uighour Turks be directed to join the Nan-Chao-Chinese forces in an expedition against Tibet. The Uighour Turks were then in occupation of parts of the modern Kansu province with their capital at what is now called Urumtsi.
I-mou-hsun's request ultimately bore fruit and a treaty was signed between China and Nan-Chao at the foot of the Tien-Tsang Shan which commands Ta-li. Four copies of the treaty were made. One copy was placed in the stone temple; one was sunk in the sacred waters of the river of the Ta-li lake or perhaps the Ta-li lake itself; one was lodged in the ancestral shrine of the Nan-Chao monarch; and one was sent to the Emperor of China. The significance of all these elaborate ceremonial processes in the making of the treaty was probably to emphasize the solemnity of the vow to respect its terms. But as a sequel to the conclusion of the treaty We Kao was appointed Regent of Nan-Chao by the Emperor whom I-mou-hsun had to accept. It seems the terms of the treaty included clauses whereby I-mou-hsun also acknowledged over again the suzerainty of China. This state of things for Nan-Chao was the culmination of his too ambitious a policy of aggrandizement at the cost of China, whose territory he had invaded without a proper appraisal of her strength.

In A.D. 795 the Tibetans, as expected, started the offensive by waging a war against Nan-Chao. I-mou-hsun replied by capturing the Tibetan officials in his kingdom and putting them to death. Meanwhile the Uighour Turks (a people of Eastern Turkestan) attacked and defeated the Tibetans in a battle. The Nan-Chao army met the Tibetans near the Iron Bridge over the Kin-sha river, a tributary of the Yang-tse-Kiang in western Yun-nan and "the brass column which marked the boundary between

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53 GURSS: 1,1, p. 266.
Man-Chao and Tibet, about 250 li north of Likiang-fu and a sanguinary battle ensured which resulted in a decisive victory for I-mou-hsun. The Tibetan loss in men and material was enormous. I-mou-hsun took sixteen towns and cut the Iron Bridge. He fought this war not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of China. He despatched the news of his victory with a map of the conquered territory to the Emperor. He sent his brother Prince Tse, accompanied by an officer, to carry that news to the Chinese Court.

Emperor Chen-tien,54 was very pleased to receive the news of the victory over the Tibetans and acknowledged it with gratitude. The Emperor, in recognition of the great achievement of the Man-Chao ruler, invested him with the title of "Man-Chao Wang" ("King of Man-Chao"). The ceremony of investiture would give an idea of the royal customs of those days. The Emperor deputed Yuan-tze (or Ts'ui Tao-shih) as his envoy-extraordinary to confer upon I-mou-hsun "a yellow gold seal", or, according to Yang-tsai "gold and silver seals",55 inscribed with "reign 705-805, patenting Nan-Chao".56 The Chinese envoy was received with great ceremony and pomp at Tai-ho, to which place the Court was probably shifted again after the treaty. When the envoy arrived at Tai-ho, Prince I-mou-hsun sent his elder brother and a group of officers with him, with sixty-five horses, to welcome and

54 or Toh-chung, the 10th Emperor of the T'ang according to Hoontrekul - op.cit., p. 92.
56 This seal or plaque inscribed with "Nan-Chao,705-805" is referred to also by W.D. Cochrane, vide his "The Origin of the Aboms" in JRAS, vol. 1914, p.161. Mentioned also in China at Home by Milne and Cochrane, p.11.
escort him to the capital. "Their harness was adorned with gold
and cowries, and the soldiers lined the road with their jingling
staves shouldered. I-mou-hsun wore a coat of gold mail and a
tiger-skin, and carried a sheath with two jingles upon it. A
thousand men with spears stood on guard, twelve elephants drawn
up in front, with the cavalry between, and the foot regiment in
the rear. At day-break the next the patent was conferred upon him.
I-mou-hsun, at the head of his suite of officers, stood facing the
north. The proclaimers faced east, and the patent-conveying envoy
faced south. The mandate of the patent was then read out. I-mou-
hsun knelt to receive the patent and seal. "He knocked his head
on the ground, and bowed twice, and then received the presents
of clothes and other things". Retiring he said "During the two
reigns, A.D. 718-756, my great-grand-father and grand-father both
received patents as hereditary kings. Fifty years have since
ever elapsed, and the present Emperor has now washed my scars, and
recorded my services, once more conferring rank and command
sons upon me. My sons' and grandsons' grandsons will for ever be
subjects of China". Then followed a great banquet, at which
some Turkish women, presented by a former Emperor, sang songs.
Their hair was quite white, as they were the only two survivors
of a once large musical troupe. 58

The account given above describes the pattern of poli-
tical relation that subsisted between China and Nan-Chao under

57 Cochrane in Shang at Home by Milne and Cochrane,
pp. 11-12.
58 GUESS, 1.1, p.266.
the Meng Dynasty. The relation, apart from the elaborate ceremonial forms, was undoubtedly one of the Emperor's formal recognition of the 'King of Nan-Chao' and the latter's acceptance of the same in the shape of the title and the seal. Nothing is known about the actual powers of intervention on the part of the imperial authority in the matters of administration of this vassal kingdom. If the king is strong and follows his policy with a firm hand the suzerain power cannot stand in his way and even remains severed for long periods. But, at times, it is to the advantage of a ruler to get formal recognition and investiture of power from the Emperor as it adds not only a superior dignity to his position, as the "King of Nan-Chao" above the inferior status of other ruling Chiefs, but also makes for the kingdom's increased strength and security against the troublesome neighbours, such as Tibet and Burma.

Having settled the problem of Chinese danger I-mou-hsun attacked and reduced to submission the "savage tribes" known as the Meng, Ho and Shi that lived on the hills north-west and north-east of Ta-li. These tribes are described as "black barbarians", a term used by the Chinese in reference to the Ngai-Lao also. There were among them Tai or Ngai-Lao splinter groups cut off from the main body when earlier the Ch'in attacked and scattered them. Their long isolation from the bulk of the race in the peculiar geographical conditions of Yun-nan and Sze-chuan made them appear as aborigines of the hills as distinct from the ruling group in the plains. Besides these, the other savage tribes that were brought under subjection by I-mou-hsun were the Lang-tang of the 'white race',
who might be a Karen tribe, and Han-Shang, who were supposed to be of Chinese descent.

During the next few years, particularly since A.D. 793, Nan-Chao was engaged in a continual war with Tibet owing to the aggression of the latter into that kingdom from the north occupying a strip of its territory. In this war I-mou-hsun had assistance from Governor Kao of Ch'eng-tu. Meanwhile, the Tibetans put into the field an army of eight thousand men against Nan-Chao with provisions for one year. The war began with the first series of combats in the south-western part of Sze-chuan which continued for a number of years. The Nan-Chao army from the south and the Chinese and the Uighur Turks from the west and north-west hammered the Tibetans so effectively that the latter had to retreat with heavy losses and the allied forces entered the Tibetan territory occupying seven cities and burning one hundred and fifty military stations during the advance. Several thousand heads of the Tibetans were cut off. A large booty of arms and supplies, left by the Tibetans, fell into the hands of the allied forces. In fact "it was the Nan-Chao that attacked their most vital parts, and made the largest captures of prisoners and plunder". I-mou-hsun captured, among others, five Tibetan Princes, whom he sent as prisoners to the Imperial Court. The Emperor responded by sending an officer to congratulate I-mou-hsun. The Nan-Chao monarch honoured his treaty with China and remained loyal to the Emperor till his death in the seventh

59 According to another account A.D. 796.
Moon of A.D. 809. He ruled for thirty years. On receiving the news of his death Emperor U-ien sent the President of the Sacrificial Court of the imperial government as a special envoy to Nan-Chao to offer condolences and sacrifices to his spirit.

Prince Su-in-ke-owien (Sin-ko-kiang), son of I-mou-hsun, succeeded to the throne of Nan-Chao in 809 and received from Emperor U-ien-he a gold seal and a very high honorific title. The enlarged territory of his kingdom demanded a second capital in the east. The city of Yun-nan-fu, already built by Fung-cia-ih, was therefore made the Eastern Capital of Nan-Chao in addition to Ta-li, which was made the Western Capital. He, however, died after a reign of one year and was succeeded by his son Prince C'wien-long-chen, who was only twelve years old.

Prince C'wien-long-chen (Kian-Lung-Sing) appears to have been a great promoter of Buddhism, for he made three Buddhas with 3,000 ounces of gold and installed them in a temple at Ta-li-fu. The origin of the famous Three Pagodas of San-tsai (San at T'a-T'zu) Ta-li is to be traced to these Three Buddhas. In 815 he invaded Sze-chuan. The story runs that at Kia-ting-chew his troops were horrified to see a strange vision of troops fighting in the air and being dispersed in disorder. It is also said that the inhabitants afterwards built a temple at Kia-ting-chew called the Fu-t'ien-shon-miao to commemorate this event. In a few years the young prince became such a wicked character that he was murdered by one of his own officials, named Wang-kia, at the age of nineteen years.

61 According to Hoontreakal 16 years. - see op.cit., p.32.
He was succeeded by his brother C’wien-li (Kian-Li-Sing) in 817. The Emperor forgave Wang-Kia for the murder, but reduced him in rank. It is perhaps one of the few instances in which the Emperor exercised his paramount authority to intervene in the internal affairs of Nan-Chao. Prince C’wien-li repaired the old pagodas and built a number of new ones. A stone tablet in the Dragon Temple in the east of Ta-li in the lake area, bears the inscription that during the reign of this king the water level of the lake rose to an unprecedented height owing to the presence of a huge serpent-like monster or dragon that had entered the lake. The Prince ordered the dragon to be killed and it was killed. Whether the Dragon Temple at Ta-li was built to commemorate this event or had been standing there as a monument of native dragon worship nothing is definitely known. But the stone inscription testifies to the fact that since the dragon cult was no longer favoured by the royal court. The Prince, after eight years of his reign, in 825 received from the Emperor Chang-kui a gold seal. In the same year he died at Yun-nan-fu, the Eastern Capital of the realm.

On his death his brother Fong-yeh (Hung-Jet), then only seven years old, succeeded to the throne in 825. The young Prince’s coronation was attended by a Chinese official Wai, who was sent by the Emperor as his representative on this occasion. But within a few years Fong-yeh came into clash with an arrogant Chinese mandarin named Tu, who was posted at Ch’eng-tu in Sze-chuan. Tu so maltreated the Chinese troops under him that the latter broke into a mutiny and large numbers of them deserted his army and entered Nan-Chao for protection. Prince Fong-yeh sent General
Wang-kia with a force to Ch'eng-tu to investigate the situation. But Governor Tu replied by attacking Wang-kia's troops. Immediately there was a fight and Tu was defeated. Wang-kia then returned triumphantly to the capital with a large number of Chinese prisoners and artisans and a vast booty. These artisans were a great asset to Nan-Chao in the reconstruction of her industries. This event appears to be the same as that mentioned by Cochrane and said to have happened in A.D. 829. In that year, as he has said, the Shan Commander-in-Chief of Lung-tung invaded Sze-chuan advancing to the very gates of Cheng-tu-fu. The Commander-in-Chief, mentioned by him, was probably General Wang-kia himself.

Chinese Annals further relate that while returning after the victory the Nan-Chao General took forcibly with him 'several myriad boys, girls, and artisans'. From that time, it is said, 'Nan-Chao was on a par with China in matters concerning art, literature and weaving'. From this it would be wrong to think that Nan-Chao borrowed them entirely from the Chinese. For it is clearly mentioned in the early Chinese Annals, such as Ch'ien han-shu and Hou han-shu that the Ngai-Lao knew how to dye with gay colours, make and embroider Chi-to (rugs made of animal hair) and po-tieh (brocaded silk and cotton) and weave flowered and fine cloth. They also knew the arts of making beautiful metallic goods, such as those of copper, iron, lead, tin, gold, silver, amber and also of bright pearls. As regards the

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literature of the early Tai, it has already been said that they had men of letters and a rich literature before they were deprived of them in the Chinese territory by the ruthless policy of destruction initiated by Shih-Wang-Ti.

In 831 Prince Fong-yeh wrote to the Emperor T'ai-he about the Ch'eng-tu incident and requested him to take action against Governor Tu for the latter's unprovoked hostility towards Nan-Chao. The Emperor, after investigating into the matter, degraded Tu appointing General Li-teh to that post. But General Li-teh's conduct was found to be no better than his predecessor's with the unfortunate result that there ensued an era of hostility between Ch'eng-tu and Nan-Chao. The greatest event of Fong-yeh's reign was the invasion of Nan-Chao by General Li-teh in 860 with an army of 100,000 men. But Prince Fong-yeh proved more than a match for the Chinese General of Sze-chuan. The latter's army was routed by Fong-yeh's forces near Ch'ien-chang-fu in Sze-chuan. Soon after this defeat Li-teh was beheaded by the order of the Imperial Government.

Just at that juncture a serious rebellion broke out among the imperial troops in Sze-chuan. Large numbers of these rebels joined the Tibetans and proceeded to invade Nan-Chao. The famous Nan-Chao General, Wang-kia, expeditiously marched with his army to resist the invaders and engaged them in a bloody battle near the Iron Bridge on the Tibetan frontier inflicting a heavy defeat on them. The Chinese alone lost ten thousand men.

In 859 Prince Fong-yeh also sent an expeditionary force under General T'wan-seng to the assistance of the king of Burma on whose kingdom an attack was made by the "Lion Kingdom".
This Lion Kingdom was probably the Liu kingdom, which, with its capital at Dvaravati in south Siam, had been pressing towards Lower Burma and founded the city of Pegu in A.D. 825 in the region referred to by the Arab geographers as Raman'na-deesa. The Burmese, with the help of Nan-Chao, successfully repulsed the enemy and the Burmese king presented Tuan-seng with a gold Buddha as a mark of gratitude for the help. Before the arrival of Tuan-seng from his Burmese campaign, Fong-yei died at Yen-nan-fu early in 860 and was succeeded by his son Shi-leng (Tien-Lung or Ts'in Lung) in his sixteenth year. General Wang-kia, who was then acting as Regent, went to welcome Tuan-seng when the latter was reaching the capital. But Tuan-seng most treacherously killed the veteran General of Nan-Chao at the very place of welcome to avenge the murder of Prince G'wien-lang-chen by the latter. Thus ended in a tragic state the life of one of the greatest Tai generals whose brilliant military career had earned for him a great reputation and whose glorious victories in the wars against China and Tibet immensely enhanced the prestige of Nan-Chao.

Prince Fong-yei's reign was also noted for a great economic development and a religious revival in the kingdom. Even to this day are to be seen in the areas of ancient marshy lands traces of his extensive irrigation works by which the marshes were drained into the great lake. A strong dam was constructed in the Li-lai ravine at a place about 10 mi south of Ta-li forming

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65 According to Scott "In 859 A.D., one Ts'in Lung, who seems to have been a Shan official rather than a member of the 'family of Hwang,' became ruler of Nan-Chao, assumed the title of Hwang-ti ..." - MSS, 1/1, (Rangoon), 1900, p. 267.
a large reservoir of water from which, in the dry season, water could be led off by means of canals to irrigate the rice fields. This work lasts to this day and its local name is "Kao-no" ("The High Pool"). All these he did to relieve the people from suffering due to a long drought which occurred during his reign.

Under the patronage of this king there was a great revival of Buddhism in the country. He built many temples and completed the work of restoring from ruin what were called the Three Pagodas which are still standing north-west of Ta-li. He also repaired the two pagodas built originally in A.D. 631 on the eastern side of the Wu-hwa-shan in Yun-nan-fu. The king's mother became a devout Buddhist nun and used 5,000 ounces of silver to decorate a room with statuettes of the Buddha in the temple at San-ta-si, where she used to pass the later part of her life. In 827 the king expelled the traditional Taoist priests from Nan-Choo. In a sense it was a revolutionary period of religious change in the kingdom. The king took particular interest in the welfare of the subjects. Under Buddhist influence he also practised abstinence from wine and women, of which he had excessive love, and tried to lead a pure and good life.

The death of Wang-kia exposed the life of the young prince Shi-leng (Ts'ın Lung, Yu-Lung or Tien-lung) to the conspiracies of the Court. The situation became critical when an influential minister named Chen-nai-i attempted to murder him. The prince's mother, who was a fisherman's daughter, was noted for her beauty. Her union with the late king was the result of a scandalous connection. Emperor Ta-chang of China was about to offer a princess of the imperial family to Shi-leng, but his
ministers dissuaded him from doing so owing to the "low birth of the Prince's mother." At this time the prince's mother had already become a Buddhist nun.

Some of the earlier princes of the Heng family of Nàn-Chao used to pay tributes to China, but C'hwien-long-chen, Fong-yeh and Shi-leng stopped them. But the Emperor thought that he had yet a rightful claim to such tributes. He therefore sent an army to demand tributes from Prince Shi-leng, but the latter in 863 attacked the Chinese in Sze-chuan and completely defeated them and took a stone Buddha, very much revered by the natives, as a trophy. In the same year his army of Tai and Yü soldiers invaded Tongking and captured Hanoi and overran Annam. Since then the initiative passed into the hands of Nän-Chao, the formidable rival of China. Knowing the weaknesses of China Nän-Chao started a long war against her which, with occasional intervals, continued for the next fifteen years. During these years, under imperialist oppressions, the fighting Tai were in revolt in Kwang-tung and Kwang-si and carried on guerilla warfare against the Chinese. The Chinese Provinces of Sze-chuan and Kwei-chow were invaded by Nän-Chao and the southern defences of China about to collapse. The story runs that in one of the earlier campaigns in Sze-chuan the Nän-Chao army had to face a desperate state for failure of rations, but a Buddhist monk, named

Song, performed the miracle of turning the sands into rice and the waters of the river into wine. The army then had an abundance of supply of food and drink and fought with great success. On another occasion a Man-Chao officer, named Tong-chou, was captured by the Chinese, but, on request from Prince Shi-leng, was released by the Emperor. An embassy was then sent to China in 370 to thank the Emperor for the magnanimous act. But the inhuman treatment, with which the Chinese officers dealt with the tribes, was retaliated by the Shana by slaughtering the Chinese who fell into their hands.

Next year (371) a Man-Chao force made another thrust into Sze-chuen capturing in a powerful sweep a number of towns and reaching Ch'eng-tu for the final blow. The Chinese Governor Lu at Ch'eng-tu was hard put to the task of defending the city under desperate conditions. He had to resort to overtures for peace with the Generals of the invading army just to gain time for the arrival of reinforcements from the imperial headquarters. In the meantime, there was an excessive concentration of civilian population for safety inside the fortifications of the capital town leaving hardly any space even for standing. The enormous crowd of men, women and children desperately struggled for space, food and water, and when the waters of the "Great Pond" were exhausted many resorted to "squeezing a drink out of basketfuls of sand." Many died under hunger and pressure. For want of coffins 'the dead were buried whole-sale in pits.' The capital was just saved from surrendering by the last-moment arrival of two imperial Generals, Jen and Seng, with troops. They halted the advance
of the besieging army and pushed them off from the capital. 68
But while leaving Ch'eng-tu the Ngaí-Lao Shans committed acts of reprisal of a barbaric nature. "The savages," writes the Chinese annalists, "had cut off the noses and ears of all the Chinese prisoners, and let them go, so that eighty per cent of the residents had artificial noses and ears of wood." 69
In the meantime China had serious domestic troubles and Emperor Chao-Suan-Ti of T'ang was murdered and with it the T'ang dynasty came to an end. No imperial forces could therefore be sent again to repel the aggressors. 70 At this time Ch'eng-tu marked the northern limit of the Nan-Chao empire and it had also the main military headquarters of China for southern defence. Though Ch'eng-tu was the scene of many great battles between China and Nan-Chao and was for a time annexed by the latter, yet the hold on the city was never complete and continued.

In 874 Prince Shi-leng again invaded Kwei-chow and his General Hwang led an expedition to Sze-chuen and advanced right up to the very gates of Ch'eng-tu, but was forced to beat a retreat by the Chinese garrison. It was also the moment when peace was concluded between China and Tibet, which to a great extent neutralised the power of Nan-Chao so far the China-Nan-Chao frontier is concerned.

68 L.Koontrakul says that Shi-leng actually annexed Ch'eng-tu in 870. The city was recovered by the Chinese only in 881 when Leng-Shwen was reigning at Ta-li. But when the imperial troops returned to the capital Leng-shwen recaptured the city - op.cit., p. 93.
69 Cochrane : op.cit., p.14 ; GUESO, 1.1, p.267.
70 L.Koontrakul : ibid., p.93.
After an interval of two years Shi-leng made an attack on Yah-choo, but was repulsed by its Governor Kao. This increasing pressure from Nan-Chao made the Emperor negotiate for peace in 377 and, as desired by Shi-leng, a Buddhist monk was sent by Governor Kao as an intermediary. But there was no peace agreement and Prince Shi-leng made his last effort to annex Sze-chuan. His attack on Sze-chuan was, however, repulsed by Governor Kao. 

Soon after this failure Prince Shi-leng suddenly fell ill with a virulent attack of fever and died in the Kui-tsiu Temple in Ueh-shi-ting in Sze-chuan. He reigned for eighteen years.

According to Yang-tsai's account Prince Shi-leng was given the posthumous title of "Emperor" and his successors enjoyed the title for nearly forty-four years as a posthumous honour until Nan-Chao was conquered by Kublai Khan in A.D. 1253. As the title was never given to them during their life-time the Emperor of China did not object to it. Regarding the assumption of the title of "Emperor" by the Nan-Chao Kings Credner writes that "in the 9th century A.D. the power of the kingdom, after victorious campaigns..."

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71 Kao appears from time to time as Governor of some province, Ch'eng-tu, Yah-choo or some others since the time of I-mou-hsun. It is probably a family name and not the name of a particular person and many Governors were appointed from the Kao family.

72 By whom the title was given is not mentioned. It was probably the official title given by the ruling family of Nan-Chao after the death of the monarch, since the Chinese Emperors would not tolerate the existence of another living Emperor within the sphere of influence of the Chinese Empire in East Asia. But the great Ko-lo-feng declared Nan-Chao as the 'Great Meng Empire' after defeating China and stopping tribute. He was an emperor in true sense of the term.

down to Tongking, was so great that King Yulung, whose
realm then stretched from Assam to Tonking (859 A.D.)
could adopt the title of emperor of Ta-li. From chrono-
logical evidences and historical accounts it appears that
Yulung was but another name for Shi-leng or a phonetic
variation of the latter and that Tongking had probably
been conquered by Shi-leng's predecessor Fong-yeh though
history is not clear about it.

According to the Chinese conception of monarchy
only the Supreme Ruler of China, the Son of Heaven or Tien-
tse, had the exclusive right to the title of 'Emperor' on
earth and he is also called Min-k'ung-hu, the people's
father-mother and he becomes the ruler of everything under
heaven. In the Chinese historical classics there is men-
tion of the Shang Emperor Fuon-Kang being the first to be
honorifically addressed as "the Son of Heaven" by Yuen
about 1399 B.C. In keeping with this tradition the Chinese
Emperors conceded the title of 'Emperor', which could not
be resisted any longer, to the powerful kings of Han-Chao,
not, however, when the latter were alive and ruling, but
after their death.

Prince Leng-shwen (Lung-shun) alias Fa, as the
Chinese called him, next succeeded to the throne of Han-Chao
at the age of seventeen. The Chinese, whose southern terri-
tories had been repeatedly invaded by Prince Shi-leng, were
expected to invade Han-Chao at any time. Hence, with a view

74 Credner : ibid., p. 6. Rosthorn : Geschichte
China, 1923, p. 119 referred to by Credner.
75 Walter Old : trans., The Shi King, (The Theosophical
to bring about reconciliation with China Prince Leng-shwen sent an embassy to the Imperial Court with proposals of peace and friendship between the two countries. The embassy was received hospitably by the Emperor and peace was granted. All was not well at Nan-Chao at this time and China's friendship was of great value to the kingdom. Emperor Cheng-he sent not only a very friendly letter to Prince Leng-shwen, but in 884 sent also a princess of the Royal Household as a wife to him. Since then Chinese envoys used to visit the Court of Nan-Chao and diplomatic relations began to develop between the two countries.

As a ruler Leng-shwen proved to be unworthy and incompetent. He was a most sensual and dissipated man. He was more after his personal pleasures than the duties of his office which he left entirely to his officials. He was therefore greatly disliked by the subjects. Being dissolute in character he soon fell under the baneful influences of his concubines at whose instance he murdered several of his servants in 888. As a result he was hated by his own attendants and was murdered by one of his own servants named Yang at Yun-nan-fu. He reigned for twenty years and was given the posthumous title of Emperor.

He was succeeded in 898 by his son Shwen-hwa, then twenty-one years old. In 900 Prince Shwen-hwa executed Yang and his family to avenge the murder of his father. He was, however, a promoter of education and Emperor Kang-ming of China established five Colleges in Nan-Chao in the year 900. He reigned for five years and died in 905 leaving behind
an infant son of eight months to succeed him.

A Chinese officer of the Court, named Cheng-mai-su of the Chang family, became the guardian of the child and acted as the regent. This man had been previously an officer of the Chinese government at Ueh-chew in Sze-chuan, but was charged with certain grave misdeeds on his part. He then fled to Nan-Chao to escape punishment and was favoured with a job by Prince Leng-shwen. He soon rose to power and became the First Grand Secretary under the king. From that position he conspired to seize the throne and, when his insidious plans were completed, he one day murdered the infant prince by crushing his testicles. Then in order to remove all fears of possible revenge from the members of the ruling house this upstart hastily collected an armed band and fell upon the members of the Heng royal family and massacred as many of them as he could reach. Over eight hundred members of the ruling house thus fell under his sword beneath the "Five Glory Tower" in Ta-li-fu. This was the tragic end of the powerful Tai-Heng Dynasty of Nan-Chao and was the act of a treacherous Chinese officer who was generously given political asylum by the father of the murdered child. The throne then passed into the hands of the Chang family and the name of the kingdom was changed into Ta-Siang-No-Euc. The new ruler built a temple at San-teh-su and decorated it with ten thousand Buddhas as a thanksgiving for success in exterminating the House of Heng. He died in 911 after reigning for eight years.

But a period of instability followed and a succession of usurpers founded a number of ephemeral dynasties
each changing the name of the kingdom after his family. Thus there came into power in succession Chao-Shan-cheng (923-29), Yang-Kan-cheng (929-33), Tsun-Szu-ping (936-44) naming the kingdom as Ta-Tien-king-kuo, Ta-Yi-Ning-kuo and Ta-li-kuo. Cheng-mai-su was succeeded by his son Ren-ming. In 913 he led an expedition against Sze-chuen, but the Chinese repulsed it inflicting heavy casualties on his army. He died of a most painful abscess formed in his ear in 925 and was succeeded by his son Long-tang at the age of twelve.

In 922 this boy king was murdered by General Yan-kan-cheng of Tong-C’wan under the influence of a mysterious happening. He placed on the throne one Chao-shan-chen who was born of a very poor family. But the general was displeased with the attitude of the new king. He murdered him after a reign of ten months and seized the throne for himself. His dynasty, which lasted only upto 937, was known as the Ta-li-ming dynasty. This usurper was an illegitimate son of Prince Leng-shwan of the Heng dynasty and was a native of Ping-C’wan-chwu. He was an officer at Ten-C’wan-chwu under Cheng-mai-su. As a ruler he was unsuccessful and was hated both by the officials and the people alike.

In 935 General Tsun-Szu-Ping (Tsun Sz-p’ing) of Tong-hai-haien revolted against Yan-kan-cheng and defeated him in a battle. Yan-kan-cheng fled from the capital. General Tsun-Szu-Ping seized the throne and installed himself as the ruler of Hsin-Chao. His dynasty is called Ta-li dynasty. According to Hsin-Chao-Yeh-seh Tsun-Szu-Ping eventually succeeded in capturing the fugitive ex-king Yan-kan-cheng, but his life
was spared, Yan-kan-cheng entered a Buddhist monastery and lived the life of a monk.

The illustrious Twan family was connected with the Hong family. Twan-Sze-Ping (Twan-Sze-p'ing) himself being probably a semi-Shan. The members of the Twan family had held high civil and military posts for many generations under the Hong. The new Twan-family ruled over Ta-li-kuo till 1253 when it was destroyed by Kublai Khan. Fourteen kings of this family are mentioned in the Annals of Non-Chao. Twan-Szu-Ping ruled for eight years and died in 944. He was a devout Buddhist and made many temples and decorated them with brass Buddhas. Mr. Parker says "this is the beginning of the tributary State of Ta-li." Scott is of the opinion that the Non-Chao Empire now "split into two". At any rate "the country round Ta-li became more and more Chinese, while the western portion, which is no doubt the kingdom of Pong of the Manipur Chronicle and of the list of his conquests made by Anawrahta, remained Shan and split up into a variety of States, possibly every now and again united under some energetic Sawbeas of one State or the other." As captain Forbes suggests the Tai race, of which the Shans form a branch, had been gradually forced out of their original seat in Yun-nan by the advance of the Mongols under Kublai Khan from a date much earlier than the destruction of the Pagan monarchy. It was about this time that a portion of the race moving south formed the kingdom of Siam.

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77 Guise, I., p. 267.
78 Ibid., pp. 267-68.
79 Ibid., p. 268.
Ywan-Szu-Bing was succeeded by his son Si-in in 944. His intensely religious bent of mind was unfitted to the management of the kingdom then in a turbulent state. After about a year's reign he renounced the throne and entered a Buddhist monastery.

Buddhism owed its predominance in Nan-Chao chiefly to the patronage and devotion received from the rulers of the Ta-li dynasty. It was during this period that the great Buddhist temples at San-ta-si were rebuilt on a magnificent scale. Nowadays, that immense site is covered with a great heap of ruins. But the Three Pagodas, which were restored and repaired by Prince Pong-yeh early in his reign, still stand in the area. The Great Pagoda is described to be "square and is built of huge bricks accurately cemented together. The base is 110 yards on each side. There are sixteen caves tapering from the tenth cave up to the pinnacle. At the top is a spiral staircase surmounted by a huge globe gilded with gold leaf. The sides are thickly plastered and are decorated with hundreds of niches containing small Buddhas. This Pagoda is about 300 feet high. After a walk through the ruins one comes to the remains of the large brass Kwan-in. The head is missing. The trunk is six feet high, across the breast it is four feet and the arm stumps

80 Sir Charles Eliot says: "Chinese Buddhist say Tara and Kuan-Yin (Kwan-in) are the same but the difference between them is this. Tara is an Indian and Lamaist goddess associated with Avalokita and in origin analogous to the Saktis of Tantrism, Kuan-Yin is a female form of Avalokita who can assume all shapes. The original Kuan-Yin was a male deity: male Kuan-Yins are not unknown in China and are said to be the rule in Korea". - Hinduism and Buddhism, vol. II, p. 17
are one foot wide". Harvey says that the people of Nan-Chao built a monastery in A.D. 777 to Kuan-Yin, the Mahayanist modouma and the above may have been the one mentioned here. Prince Fong-yeh's reign was a turning point in the religious history of Ta-li or rather western Yun-nan, which was the central seat of the Ngai-Lao Shans. It was he who drove out for the first time the Taoist priests of his kingdom and espoused the cause of Buddhism and established numerous monasteries through which to propagate the new faith. Yun-nan-fu had been already under Buddhism for over two centuries and western Yun-nan must have known Buddhism much earlier than the ninth century A.D. Even in the first century B.C., some Buddhist missionaries are said to have come to Yun-nan from eastern India and preached their religion in that country and in the neighbouring areas. A Chinese scholar named Mou-ju advocated the Buddhism so introduced at that time and tried to show how it was superior to the ancient religion of the Chinese. A number of Princes then adopted Buddhism. Chavannes points out that the Ngai-Lao country in western Yun-nan was converted to Buddhism in the time of the Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 221). But this earlier Buddhism of Nan-Chao probably died out for want of constant intercourse with India and the prevailing beliefs in the local non-Buddhist cults, such as the Dragon cult, continued to flourish. It appears therefore that Nan-Chao

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81 E. Garthow: ibid., p. 31.
83 JFRS, vol. XIX, Part II, p. 139.
received Buddhism earlier than China. It was Ko-lo-feng's enterprise that opened up the way, closed since A.D. 342, to the central seat of religion and culture of the Pyu country (Burma) and onward to Magadha, and since the second quarter of the ninth century A.D. Buddhism had become the dominant religion of Nan-Chao.

Buddhism found its way to China as early as the first century A.D. It was Chang Kien who first brought the knowledge of Buddhism to China in 126 B.C. on his return from his travels through Central Asia then already under Buddhist influence. In the year A.D. 61 the Emperor Ming-Ti is said to have sent messengers to India to bring back Buddhist books and priests. At any rate, certain Buddhist missionaries were brought to the Chinese Imperial Court. The first Indian missionaries, Kasyapa Matanga and Dhammaratna, who had visited China in the third quarter of the first century A.D. gathered around them a considerable following in the newly founded White Horse Monastery in

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84 Polliot, in: Deux Itinéraires (pp.154-83), argues that the Thai of Nan-Chao received civilizing and Buddhist influences from India via the Piao of Burma.
86 The two monks Kasyapa Matanga and Dhammaratna resided on white horses and used them also for carrying the Buddhist scriptures and therefore the monastery was named White Horse Monastery. It is said that Kasyapa Matanga was a native of Central India. These monks went to China, then under the Emperor Ming-Ti (A.D. 58-76) of the Eastern Han, from the kingdom of the Ta Yueh-chih, the Yueh-chih being the Kushans. Another monk, named Chupa-Len, who came from Central Asia, also followed shortly. These monks were installed at Loyang, the capital of the Ming-dynasty, in the White Horse Monastery. The journey was rendered safe as, in the meantime, the troublesome Ming-Nu had been crushed by Ming-Ti. In A.D. 67 Kasyapa Matanga translated into Chinese a Buddhist work called 'Avicatvaringaat Vastu-Sutra'. It contains the fundamental sutras of Buddhism. Its ideas and precepts are Mahayanist. - Eliot: op.cit. vol II. 1954 (London) 87. -- 84
the Chinese capital Loyang. In the fourth century A.D., the Lu-Shan school of Buddhism was founded in the south of the Empire by Hui-yuan. This learned monk was born in A.D. 334 at Lou-fan, modern Tai-chou in North Shan-si. Lu-Shan was a solitary and picturesque mountain resort in Kiang-si. Hui-yuan, who had studied at Ch'ang-ang, a famous Buddhist centre of learning in China, founded at Lu-Shan a school which he named the "school of White Lotus" (Po lien sha). Among his seventeen eminent Buddhist scholars there were two Indians, Buddhayasas of Kashmir and Buddhahchandra of the Sakya clan. The Lu-Shan school was noted for introducing in China the cult of Amitabha. Hui-yuan's disciples collected Buddhist manuscripts with Sanskrit texts in Central Asia and translated them into Chinese. This northern Buddhism of the Mahayana school, that spread down to the borders of Non-Chao, must have penetrated into that country, but there is no evidence to show that it could make any great impression on the Ngai-Lao Shans before the end of the eighth century A.D. It was undoubtedly the conquest of Burma by Ko-lo-feng that opened the way to a fresh wave of Buddhism to enter Ta-li from the south-west, which brought about a Buddhist renaissance in that country. Subsequent expansion of the Non-Chao empire to the south must have brought in also ideas of the Southern Canon. Ko-lo-feng's friendship with Tibet and the presence of Tibetans in his kingdom certainly facilitated interchange of ideas between the two countries and hence Tibetan Buddhism must have had a place

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87 P.C. Bagchi: India and China, 1950, (Hind Kitabs Ltd.), p.29.
among the peoples of Nan-Chao. The monastery built and
dedicated to Kwan-yin by the people of that country is a case
in proof of it. About the Tibetan influence over Nan-Chao much
is not known. But yet, as a nation, the Nan-Chao Tai were
almost certainly following their racial religion up to this
time, "worshipping", as Wood points out, "the beneficent
spirits of the hills, forests, and waters, and propitiating
numerous demons with sacrifices and offerings".\(^{89}\) He further
says that this simple faith survives in Siam to the present
day, and in the north is still more truly the religion of
the country people than is Buddhism. So also the Ahoms of
Assam brought with them not Buddhism but their racial reli-
gion, may be with a slight admixture of Buddhistic influence.

Regarding the influence of Tibetan Buddhism it may
be noted that Buddhism was established in Tibet as late as
the middle of the seventh century A.D. under the patronage of
Song-ten Gampo, who was one of the greatest Tibetan kings.
The introduction of Buddhism into Tibet is attributed to two
Buddhist wives of Song-ten Gampo - one, a Chinese princess
named Wen-Ch'eng, given in marriage by the Emperor T'ai Tsung
(A.D. 627-50) and the other, a Nepalese princess, named Burkuti
Devi. But in Tibet Buddhism as such could not make much head-
way owing to the prevalence of local Shamanism. There evolved
a new form of mixed Buddhism called Lamaism. It may be noted
that the Buddhism, that was imported into Tibet and was fast
growing between the seventh and the thirteenth century A.D.,

\(^{89}\) W. A. R. Wood: "A History of Siam. (T. Fisher Unwin
was essentially of the Tantric form which was taught in the universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila, particularly during the rule of the Pala kings of Bihar and Bengal. The Balaputra inscription characterizes the Buddhist monks of Nalanda as Tantrika-bodhisattvas. Under the Pala dynasty, the Buddhist pantheon was "enriched by a host of new iconographical forms, mudras and postures, or asanas." 90 Hence the Tibetan form of Buddhism or Lamaism is described by David Macdonald as "a priestly mixture of Shamanist cult, Tantric mysticism, devil-worship and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, touched here and there by the brighter lights of the teachings of Buddha." 91

Han-Chao undoubtedly derived some inspiration from Tibetan Buddhism. But the form, called Tantrayana, which accommodated many prevailing superstitions and mystic cults, was introduced into China by Vajrabodhi and widely popularised by his disciple Amoghavajra during the eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian era. Buddhism of this mixed form rapidly spread and exerted its dominant influence almost all over the Far East. It may be assumed that Han-Chao was not free from the influence of this school though no definite information about it is available. The Ta-li dynasty had fourteen rulers holding the throne of Han-Chao from A.D. 936 to 1236. These rulers were themselves devoted to Buddhism and built numerous Buddhist temples and monasteries in the kingdom for the promotion of that religion. They used to retire into a quiet monastic life after reigning for a period.

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90 "Indo-Nepalese Art in Tibet" by Dr. George Reorich in Stepping Stones, Kalingpong, vol.I, No.3, p.49.
91 His Tibet, 1945, p.19.
In 973, during the reign of Prince Shi-shwen, peace was restored in Sze-chuan and the frontiers between China and Nan-Chao were finally fixed by the Emperor of China, who "laid his jade axe on the line made by the Ta-tu river and said that all the land beyond this river should remain under the rule of the Southern Princes of Nan-Chao". This was done in accordance with a map of Nan-Chao drawn by General Wang-chien-pin after the settlement of peace with Nan-Chao and presented to the Emperor to fix the boundary. It appears that the Emperor renounced his claims to the disputed territories and settled the political frontiers to the satisfaction of the rulers of Nan-Chao. This settlement was followed by a long period of peace and friendly relations between the two countries extending over two centuries. Though there were occasional internal troubles, Nan-Chao used to get Chinese support against external enemies and rebellious vassal chiefs and the Nan-Chao Princes and nobles valued most the titles and honours conferred by the Emperor upon them. Rebellious Man-tai tribes, living near Annam under their Chief Beng-Kao, gave much trouble to Nan-Chao during the reign of Si-lien in the middle of the eleventh century A.D., but the latter quelled the rebellion with the assistance of the Chinese.

This period of political security from external danger was marked by considerable degree of material and cultural progress in Nan-Chao. Prince Chen-shwen (A.D. 1097-1109) of the Latter or Second Ta-li dynasty introduced notable reforms in the

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92 Carthew: ibid., pp. 31-32.
administration including abolition of the old corvee system. He also built a city at T'su-hsiang-fu. In 1104 he sent Kao-tai-uien to the Emperor Tseng-min with despatches and eighty gold spear-heads to be offered to him as a present. He further sent a list of Nan-Chao families to the Emperor with recommendations for conferment of imperial honours. Burma and two other States sent to Chen-shwen tributes which included elephants and spices. The next ruler Prince Ho-U (A.D. 1109-1146) used to receive tributes from a number of adjacent principalities. The tributes were in gold, silver, precious stones, elephants, rhinoceros together with thousands of horses and heads of cattle.

The Nan-tai tribes again rebelled against Nan-Chao, but were subdued by Kao-tai-ming, the Grand Secretary of State and Chief Counsellor. In the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. Nan-Chao rose to be one of the most powerful kingdoms of East Asia developing an excellent administrative system with many brilliant men in the management of the affairs of the State. It was also a period of good relations between China and Nan-Chao. Kao-tai-ming received imperial title for his meritorious works. Ho-U's reign was followed by a more or less stable government under two other kings who succeeded him. Then came the reign of Prince Chi-hsiang (A.D. 1201-39) which was remarkable for all round peace and progress in the kingdom and for some of the finest talents ever produced in that country. In 1239 this Prince abdicated in favour of his son Hsien-hsin, himself retiring to monastic life.

93 Carthew, ibid., p. 34.
94 Ibid., p. 34.
The critical period of Nam-Chao began in the reign of Prince Hsian-hsin. The Mongol hordes under Mangu Khan and Kublai Khan swept down on the frontiers of Nam-Chao in 1245 from the vantage point of Sze-chuan, which had for about a decade been made a part of the Mongol dominion. Kublai Khan was the brother of the Mongol Emperor Mangu Khan. In this campaign Kublai Khan was assisted by his very able Generals, Wu and Ho. For reaching Nam-Chao the Mongol army had to undertake a strenuous march over a distance of 2,000 li (about 667 English miles), much of which lay across the mountainous country of Eastern Tibet and numerous rivers and marshy tracts. Prince Hsian-hsin sent General Kao-he to oppose Kublai Khan near the River of Golden Sand but he was killed in the battle that took place between the two armies. It is said that it took a few months for the army to arrive at the borders of Ta-li. It could advance no farther owing to the impassable condition of the roads and rivers caused by continuous rain.

In the meantime Prince Hsian-hsin had died in 1252 and his son Twan-shing-shih (or Twan Hsin-ei or Hsin-ei) ascended the throne. He was the last king of Ta-li-kuo. From

95 Properly Hu-pe-Lei or Ku-pe-Lei from which some modern writers express it as Khubilai or Kublai.
96 Called in the Mongol dialect Kha Khan or Grand Khan or Emperor.
97 The Mekong. The Chinese name of the river is Lan-tsang Shui. There is golden sand in its bed which the Ngai-Lao wash and melt and 'so make gold'. It has also holes or bright pearls and has amber (hu-p'ao) native in the soil.- "The Tan and the Ngai-Lao" in JBRG, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 114.
the skirts of Ta-li Kublai Khan sent three of his officers to him to demand his submission to the Mongol Emperor. Prince Shing-shih foolishly put these officers to death and sent troops to oppose the Mongols. Man-tai forces were to join the Ta-li army to strengthen the defence, but they did not arrive in time. Prince Shing-shih's army was defeated by the Mongols and the city of Shang Kwan to the north of Ta-li captured. Unable to stand against the invading army, which was numerically superior, Prince Shing-shih fled to Yun-nan-fu leaving his General Kao-fai-chang with a small force to defend the city of Ta-li. The General gallantly fought against the Mongols till he was mortally wounded and fell beneath the Great Tower. With his dying breath the General cried: "Alas! the House of Twan has come to an end, though members of that House still live. Thus ends the Kingdom of Nan-Chao." The story goes that as he died black clouds gathered and heavy peals of thunder shook the sky. Kublai Khan heard this and said: "Behold! A loyal and devoted minister died." The survivors to the Nan-Chao garrison fought bravely till they were exhausted and had to surrender on January 7th, 1233.99a

The widow and the two sons of the deceased General were then brought before Kublai Khan, who being moved with pity spared their lives saying: "Behold the widow and sons of a most faithful and brave soldier. Take good care of them

98 Carthew: ibid., p. 37.
99 Ibid., p. 37.
and when the boys are old enough give them a position in the Government. It may be mentioned that Kublai Khan's character came under the sobering influence of Buddhism which he adopted as a national religion of China. His Buddhism was of the Tibetan form. During his reign a mass of Tibetan Buddhist literature was translated into the Mongolian language. He made himself more a Chinese than a Mongol and ruled with moderation. In religion, he was tolerant though he disliked the Taoists, and treated his subjects with humanity.

After the fall of Ta-li in 1253 Kublai Khan captured the other important cities in western Yun-nan and received the submission of the Nan-tai tribes. He next sent Generals Hu and Ho in the same year to conquer the second capital Yun-nan-fu. At Yun-nan-fu, with the fall of the city, they captured the fugitive king Shing-shih. Kublai Khan, however, forgave the captured king and made him a provincial Governor in Nan-Chao. Shing-shih, the last ruling Prince of Nan-Chao, died in A.D. 1260 on his journey to the Court of the Mongol Emperor after having held his hereditary office of Governor.

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100 He appointed a Tibetan Buddhist scholar named Phagspa, whom he had brought to his Court, to the office of Kuo-Ssu or Preceptor of the State to administer the religious affairs of the whole country. He declared Lamaism as a national religion of China. From Emperor Kublai Khan Phagspa received the title of Ta Pao Fa Wang or Prince of the Great and Precious Law of Buddha and also an imperial decree to invent a script for the Mongolian language. - vide Dr. Chou Hsiang-Kuang: The History of Chinese Buddhism, (Indo-Chinese Literature Publications, Allahabad-2, India), 1956, pp.179-80.
for seven years, Kublai Khan died at the ripe old age of eighty. Successive Mongol-Chinese Emperors appointed the members of the Tuan royal family of Ta-li as hereditary Governors. Ta-li was placed under Generals Hu and Ho and Kublai Khan founded the Yuan dynasty of China in 1253 with his capital at Khan Baligh (or City of the King), now Peking (Peiping).¹⁰¹ This ended the Tai empire of Men-Chao in South China.

Administrative System of Men-Chao:

The external relations of Men-Chao, except for a few reigns of strong monarchs, was governed by the Chinese conception of imperialism, according to which the Emperor of China could have no equal on earth. The Emperor was supreme over all other rulers of the known world, though, in fact, he could exercise suzerainty only over the East Asian countries outside India, Japan and probably, for a long period, also Tibet. Men-Chao, because of her peculiar geographical position, had to acknowledge this suzerainty and pay tribute to China periodically. Her embassies and sometimes the ruling Prince himself used to visit the imperial Court in recognition of the overlordship of Chinese Emperor. In the usual course the Emperor would appoint a Resident at the capital of Men-Chao whose duty was to keep the imperial government informed of the state of affairs in that kingdom and, where necessary, to advise its rulers on matters of high policy. Prefects were appointed by the imperial government to manage or supervise and report on the affairs.

of the vassal States of the Tai country of Yun-nan and Szechuan before the emergence of the powerful kingdom of Nan-Chao. In his capacity as the overlord the Emperor also conferred on the Princes and nobles of Nan-Chao imperial honorific titles and seals and sometimes appointed the members of the royal family as Governors and Generals under the imperial government.

Nan-Chao was a kind of oriental monarchy in which there was a Council of Ministers to advise and assist the king. The functions of the Ministers were both civil and military. Important military officers were often appointed as Ministers by the king for consultation and guidance in the formulation of State policy. The kingship was hereditary. The First Grand Secretary of State is a dignitary, probably next in rank to the king. We know for the first time from Parker's translations of T'eng-yueh Annals that there were Ministers of State, cen-sors, or examiners, generals, record officers, chamberlains, judges, treasurers, aediles,102 ministers of commerce etc., and the native word for each department was Shwang. Minor officials managed the granaries, stables, taxes, etc., and the military organisation was by tens, centurions, chiliarchs, decachiliarchs, and so on. Military service was compulsory for all able-bodied men, who drew lots for each levy. Each soldier was supplied with a leather coat and a pair of trousers. There were four distinct army corps or divisions, each having its own standard. The king's body-guard were called

102 Comparable to Roman magistrates, superintending public works, shows etc.
chu-nu katsa, and we are told that katsa or katsu meant leather belt. The men wore chuti, helmets, and carried shields of rhinoceros hide. The centurions were called Lo-tsa-tsz. Scott remarks that these names, if they really were Shan and not Chinese inventions, have been lost since the Shans ceased to be a conquering power. Parker has further pointed out that 'some of the best cavalry soldiers were of the Wang-tsa tribe, west of the Kekhong. The women of this tribe fought too, and the helmets of the Wang-tsa were studded with cowries.' It is not known who these Wang-tsa tribesmen were, so distinguished in the past by their martial qualities. Parker thought that they were the Wa people, but the modern Wa do not rear horses or ponies for they look upon them as highly dangerous animals.

'There were six metropolitan departments and provincial viceroys in the kingdom. The barbarian word for department was Kien.' Of such departments the most important were Peh-ngai, Meng-shë and Tai-ho (Ta-li-fu). When the King

103 George Scott, "Shan Buddhism" in JRAS, 1912, pp. 487-90; GUESS, i.i, 1900 by Scott and Hardiman, p. 263.
104 Ibid., p. 263.
105 Keng of present times, which in Leq, Shan and Siamese becomes Chiang and along the Kekhong is frequently pronounced and sometimes written, sieng, whence the French form xieng. The Burmese transformed it into kyaing. The forms keng and kaieng are freaks of the British military officers and of railway promoters. The word may be compared with the Wa ken, meaning a circle, or community of villages under one chief, as Ken Tau and Wa Pet Ken, beyond the Nam Hka." - Ibid., p. 263.
106 The capital of the King of Tien or Yun-nan - ibid., p. 264.
107 Meng-shë, Meng-shë, Meng Se or Hsen-hse refers to the same place, namely Yun-nan-Sen - ibid., p. 224, and also Milne and Cochrane: Shans at Home, p. 7. According to Parker Meng-shë was the ancient seat of the Meng (Mung) family of Nan-Chao rulers. This is, he says, doubtless the modern Mangahi, called by the Shans Heng-Hkawn. Further Meng is doubtless the Shan Hong, a State or fortified town - GUESS, i.i, 1900, p. 264.
sallied forth, eight white-scallopped standards of greyish purple were carried before him; two feather fans, a chowry, an axe, and a parasol of king-fishers' feathers having a red bag. The Queen-mother's standards were scallopped with brown instead of white. She was called Sin-Mo or Sin-mo, and the Queen-wife was called Tsin-wu. The chief wife of a Sawbwa of the later period was, under the Indian Buddhist influence, called Haha Devi. 109

Nan-Chao was organized on a feudal basis. The kingdom under Ko-lo-feng developed into an empire in the middle of the eighth century A.D. with the extension of its sway from Magadha on the west to Kwei-chou and Kwang-si frontiers on the east and from Tibet on the north, to the borders of Tongking on the south. The empire farther extended during the reigns of his successors and included Tongking with Hanoi. The local ruling Chiefs within the dominions of Nan-Chao acknowledged her overlordship and paid tributes to her king. Nan-Chao had only two most powerful rivals, namely, China and Tibet. In the middle of the eleventh century A.D. the Pagan Empire of Burma arose as a third potential rival. Surrounded by these powerful kingdoms Nan-Chao held her sovereignty as much by diplomacy as by her military prowess. The balance of power depended on their alliances with each other against the most powerful and troublesome amongst them. But China was generally holding a predominant position commanding respect and receiving homage from most of the East Asian countries including Nan-Chao. The political impact of the Mongols wiped out finally from the

109 Ibid., p. 264.
scene the great Tai kingdom of Nan-Chao and with it ended the age-long struggle for power between China and Nan-Chao.

The extant records of old throw some light on the economic and social system of the kingdom of Nan-Chao. Land was apportioned to each family according to rank; superior officials receiving forty shwang or acres. This method of distribution of land survives, we are told by Wood, in Siam to the present day, in the nominal sakdi na grade conferred upon officials. Every prince, official, and private person, had a certain amount of land allotted to him. For instance, the Chao P'yuas, or P'yaes, holding important posts, were allowed to hold from 1,000 to 4,000 acres. Subordinate officials, such as K'uns and Luangs, held from 160 acres upwards. Common people held 10 acres. The Aboms of Assam had a similar system which will be described elsewhere. The people knew the arts of weaving cotton, silk and woollen and reared silk-worms. The salt wells of K'unming (Yun-nan-fu) were free to the people. West of Yung-ch'ang a kind of mulberry grew from the wood of which bowls were made. Gold was found in many parts of the country, both in the sands and in the mountains. The Mekong river in the north was noted for the presence of alluvial gold. West of Momien (T'eng-Yueh) the race of horses was particularly good. People of all ranks, including the nobles, engaged themselves in agricultural work. It is

110 The tone of this word is different from the tone of the first-mentioned word shwang meaning a department of the government.
112 Ibid., p. 85.
interesting to note that it took three men to drive an oxcart: one led, one drove, and the third poked up the animal. As mentioned, the old corvee system was abolished, but each man paid a tax of two measures of rice a year. As a special mark of honour, the chief dignitaries wore a kimpolu, or a coat of tiger-skin comparable to the modern fur-coat. The women's hair was gathered into two locks and plaited into a chignon. Their ears were ornamented with pearls, green-stone, and amber. It is said that female morals were easy previous to marriage, but after marriage one has to suffer even death penalty for adultery.

In the T'ang dynastic history a list of the kings of what it calls the Royal Family of Heng is inserted.

In this royal nomenclature the last syllable of the father's name forms the first of the son's, and this is so in the case of the fourteen Heng family Princes of Nam-Chao, who ruled

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113 Ibid., p. 364.
114 Hung-mu-lo (649-74), Lo-sheng (674-712), She-lo-pi (712-28), Pi-lo-lo (728-58), Ko-lo-feng (746-73), Feng-ch'iei (died young), I-mou-ham (773-808), Hsun-ko-ch'uan (806-9), Ch'uan-lung-sheng (809-16), Ch'uan-li (816-24), Ch'uan-feng-yu (824-59). The last three rulers are brothers. Shih-lung (859-77). This Prince's mother was not of the blood-royal, but a fisherman's daughter of exquisite beauty. Lung-shun (877-97), Shun-hua-chien (897-902). The above list of Princes is from Harvey's History of Burma, 1925, (Longmans, Green and Co., Calcutta), pp. 311-13. The dates, he says, are well substantiated by Chinese records. When compared with other records a slight difference of a year or so is sometimes noticed.

from A.D. 649 to 903. In the early Pagan dynastic list also a similar practice in naming the Princes is noticed. From this Harvey remarks that the 'identity system' indicates a common origin of the two royal families.115 But Scott rightly observes that this idea of hereditary syllables, as found in the Chinese writings, seems to be purely fanciful, or an invention of the Chinese mind, devoted to ancestral worship. In modern days the Shan takes his name on much the same system as the Burman, without any reference to the name of his father, and in any case the Sawbwas are always known by a title, assumed after their accession.116 The naming system also depends on the prevailing linguistic or cultural influence. It does not necessarily signify a common origin or a community of race. In spite of racial differences such cultural similarity is possible among peoples living long in a common environment. The case of the Ahoms in Assam, who belong to the Tai race but have lived long in an environment of Sanskritised Assamese culture, adopting and promoting it, can be cited as an example in this regard.

That the Tai were a literary people from before the rise of the Ch'in empire in the middle of the third century B.C. is proved by the records of ruthless persecution of the Tai literati by Shih-Wang-Ti, who also destroyed most of their books. Yet, after a long period of struggle with the Chinese imperialists, they reappeared as a ruling race in the kingdom of Han-Chao and settled down to social and economic

116 GUBSS, 1,1, 1900, pp. 264-65.
reconstruction and also to literary pursuits. As already mentioned above, I-mou-hsun entered into an agreement with China when Tibet threatened Nan-Chao and four copies of a treaty were made. W.W. Cochrane wrote to a distinguished archaeologist asking in what languages and alphabets these copies of the treaty were presumably written and got the reply that they were written in Oighur, Chinese, Tibetan, and Shan (Tai) respectively, though the script might be one common to the Chinese and the Tai or to all. Of course, no proof whatever of the statement was given. Perhaps no old record was at the time available containing the texts of the treaty or any reference to the languages and alphabets of the same. Yet, in view of the advancement made by the race in Nan-Chao, it would be wrong to presume that the Tai of that country were illiterate. It should be remembered that it is known on good authority that the Chinese annalists speak of the Ngaï-lao kingdom as being quite a reasonable approximation to their own civilization.

The Chinese had the habit of referring to the Nan-Chao Tai as barbarians. But 'we need not attach', remarks Wood, 'much meaning to this expression. They called all foreigners barbarians down to a very recent date.'

117 "Shan and Buddhism of the Northern Canon" by Cochrane in JRAI, 1912, pp. 467-90.
118 Ibid.