CHAPTER V

POLITICAL EXPANSION OF THE TAI IN THE MENAM AND MEKONG VALLEYS

EARLY KINGDOMS IN SIAM (Now THAILAND: Muang Thai)

In the Menam-Mekong region of South-east Asia, Siam (Thailand) is the home of the independent Tai or Thai peoples. It extends southwards into the Malay Peninsula and is bounded on the west and north by Burma and on the north-east and north by French Indo-China. It is about 1,300 miles long from north to south and about 500 miles from west to east at its greatest width comprising an area of 200,234 sq. miles with the Menam Chao P'ya flowing from the north to south, of which the chief tributaries are the Me Ping, the Me Yom, the Me Wang and the Me Sak. It is chiefly lowland with the valley of the Menam in the west and the valleys of the Mun and the Mekong in the east. North Siam is a combination of mountains, streams and forests, and the north-eastern part forms a large plateau about 800 feet high.

Setting aside the question of the pre-historic cave dwellers with flint tools and weapons, which are still dug up, we find that the earliest known aborigines of Siam belong to three races, the tall and fair complexioned Was or Lueas in the north and the dark curly-haired Negritos
and wavy-haired Indonesians in the south. The Semangs and Sakais of the forest of Maley are said to be the remnants of the last two races. They wander about naked and squalid. Then there came in the early centuries of the Christian era the Mons, or Talaings as they are now called in Burma, from their main habitat in the region of Thaton and Prome (Ramanna-desa) and occupied Central Siam to the west of the Menam Chao P'ya called the country of Dvaravati. There spread westwards from the Mekong delta, Cambodia and the middle Mekong region another race of people, called Khmers, who occupied almost the whole of eastern Siam and, by the beginning of the eleventh century, established their sovereignty over the Mon country of Louvo and Dvaravati. Under the pressure of the advanced Mons and Khmers the Lawas mostly took refuge in the hills and the southern aborigines migrated to farther south.

The most powerful impact on the Mons and Khmers was that of the Tai. The Tai political pressure on Siam came from the north. The origins of this pressure are to be traced to certain events of historic importance in the earlier abodes of the race in the north. It may be remembered that the section of the Tai population of the ancient State of Lo that followed the Marquis of Lo to Shu (Sze-chuan) had to suffer terribly under the most rigorous conditions of forced labour imposed by Shih-Vang-Ti. Many perished under those conditions and those who survived the oppression escaped to the wilds of Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kwei-chow. A great
bulk of them crossed the frontiers of the Chinese dominions and settled in southern Sze-chuan and western Yun-nan with their central seat in Ta-lu Fu where they became known by their generic term Ngai-Lao. There were also Tai settlers of earlier times in that area who had been driven from the north by the Ch'in army in the first quarter of the third century B.C. They consolidated their power under their Chiefs and tried to expand. After a lapse of about two centuries and a half the Ngai-Lao came into clash with the Chinese who then rediscovered them in this southern region. The Ngai-Lao Chiefs, however, accepted the suzerainty of China and received Imperial Prefects appointed for their country.

But during General Chu-Ko-Liang's military campaigns in Yun-nan in A.D. 226 for quelling a rebellion against the authority of the Shu Han, a mass evacuation of people, predominantly Tai, took place and a great wave of these refugees from Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kweichow moved southwards down the valleys of the Mekong and Salween rivers. As a result, numerous Tai colonies began to spring up from the third century A.D. in the middle Mekong region and in the Salween valley of East Birma.

Those Tai people, who settled themselves in the middle Mekong region, built up a State called Hsip-Hsawng-Panna in the area of Keng-Hung, on the western bank of the Mekong river (Lan-Tsang-Kiang of the Chinese). In the ninth century A.D., if not earlier, this State comprised a part of southern territory of Yun-nan, a part of the eastern

[1] Also called Kiang, Kiang-Kuang, or Chiang-Kuang
Shan country of Burma, a part of the northwestern territory of the Laos kingdom and the northernmost part of Siam with Chieng-Sen, Chieng-Rai and Muang-Yang as its principal cities. In the whole of this area the first city to become prominent historically was Chieng-Sen, a capital of a Tai State on the bank of the Mekong. Hallett points out that the Tai or Shan migrating southwards from Yun-nan took possession of the country which before their arrival had been occupied by the Yuns, or Karens, as they are called by the Burmese, who, on their part, had driven the Lews, or Lava, the aboriginal inhabitants, to the southward and into the hills. The Yuns occupied the country to the east of the Salween at the time of the arrival of the Shans, Kiang-Hung, he says, is still called Kiang Yun-gyee, or the large Yun town, by the Burmese. The Shans who inhabit the Yun country are called Yun Shans.

Though the earlier history of Chieng-Sen is shrouded in the mists of legends, yet from the ninth century onwards it played the main role in directing the course of early political development of the Tai colonists in the Upper Menam valley. Wood says that a list of kings, presumably Tai, belonging to the ancient Chieng-Sen dynasty is available, but most of the early kings appear to be more mythological than historical. But one Prince P'rohm (Skr. Brahma), said to be a scion of that dynasty, appears to be a historical

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2 Hoontrakul: op.cit., p.100.
figure from the accounts of his deeds. He was a Tai political adventurer of the ninth century A.D. He crossed the Mekong river and founded the first Tai colony at Chai Praka in the district of Chiang-Rai. Next he founded, to the west of Chiang-Rai, the city of Muang-Fang on the bank of the river Me-Pang, a southern tributary of the Mekong, about A.D. 867. He then invaded the Cambodian Empire with a powerful drive down the Menam valley. He defeated the Cambodian forces, broke their defences and conquered their territories right down to Sawank'alo (Skr. Svargaloka) where he built a city called Jalieng or Chaliang. The great numbers of earlier Tai settlers, whom he found in the conquered territories, welcomed him on his victorious advance to the south. Prince Phra Phrom's was probably the first major war of liberation of the Tai in the Upper Menam valley after Phra Riang's temporary victory over the Cambodians at Sawank'alo in the seventh century A.D. and his proclamation as sovereign of Zimme. That this early Phra Riang Dynasty was overthrown soon after his death by the 'king of Kiang Tsen' is significant and may well be connected with the Chieng-Sen rulers' design on this southern country with Tai subjects under Cambodia, which, in the ninth century,

3 According to some writers it was founded about or after A.D. 881. Reginald le May thinks that Brahman (Ph'roim) crossed the Mekong river about A.D. 860. - Ibid, p.156.
4 Wood : op.cit, p.50.
culminated in the conquests of Prince P'rhohm.

How long the Tai State formed by Prince P'rhohm in northern Siam continued to last is not known and there was a gap of about three centuries and a half without a regular history of the kingdom of Chiang-Sen. Dodds says that the kingdom of Chiang-Sen has a history as brilliant as that of Nan-Chao. But at one stage the Tai abandoned this capital at Chiang-Sen and founded a kingdom farther south-west, of which the capital was Phou Kam, a town situated on the Salween river. This new enterprise, however, proved to be ephemeral. Prince Damrong also made mention of an independent Tai State in the valley of the Salween river, but owing to the pressure of population, a number of them migrated farther westward and settled in Burma, while others went towards Tongking and Luang Phra Bang. The exact date of foundation of this State in the Salween valley remains unmentioned.

K'un Chom T'amma, a descendant of Prince P'rhohm, founded the city of P'ayao in A.D. 1096 to the south of Chiang-Sen. This city became the capital of an independent Tai State in North Siam created at the cost of the Cambodian empire.

By the middle of the eleventh century some of the Tai communities penetrated Central Siam (Thailand), but they were minorities with no political significance. They formed

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5 Dodds: op. cit, chap. XXI.
6 Reginald le May: op. cit., p. 156.
themselves into semi-independent villages (ben or war) or towns (muang or mung) each with its own chief called Mouth muang (father of muang). Early in the twelfth century A.D., the Tai in the Upper Menam valley made of their muang small States under their chieftains called Cheop. It had all been a slow process, so long, but in the thirteenth century, there was what has been described by Coedé’s an ‘effervescence’ among the Tai in the middle Mekong area including a part of North Siam. Kublai Khan’s conquest of A.D. Ta-li in 1253 caused a further pressure of Tai population southwards into Upper Burma and the no-man’s-land bordering on Siam.

It is necessary here to look into the background of the expansion of Cambodian dominion over Siam, called archaeologically Cambodian or Ramayana period. The pre-Kmer ancient kingdom of Funan (or Buk-nam), which was confined originally to Cambodia and Cochinchina, developed into an extensive maritime empire in the third century A.D., stretching from the Bay of Bengal in the west to Champa in the east. It also included a major part of the Malay Peninsula. Funan was undoubtedly the first great power in South-East Asia in the early centuries of the Christian era. But near the middle of the sixth century A.D., it was conquered by the Kmer State of Chenla which was to its north. This State was a vassal of Funan. It was a revolt by Bhavavarman and his brother Chitra Sena of Chenla, probably to restore the legitimate line, that led to this conquest. According to Briggs Funan still enjoyed autonomy until A.D. 627, when it was incorporated with
Chehla by Isanavarman, during the seventh century A.D.

Chehla seems to have conquered the valley of the Se Müm and all that is now eastern Siam and Laos up to the border of Yun-nan. The eighth century in Khmer history was a period of unrest and confusion. It is not until the early ninth century A.D. that stability was restored by king Jayavarman II, who succeeded in bringing the whole country under his control. Jayavarman II came to the throne in A.D. 802 and was the first king to transfer the capital to Angkor in the north-western region of the Great Lake. Briggs says that after the establishment of the Empire of the Kambuja in that year, the Khmer monarchs of the ninth and tenth centuries seem to have reestablished their authority over the region of eastern Siam and the neighbouring areas to the east. But the Mon States — Louvo including probably the old Dravarati and its colony, Haripunjai (Lamp'un) in the north — apparently extending over the whole of western Siam, from the Gulf on the south to the Mekong on the north, remained independent nearly to the close of the tenth century A.D.

Funan proper, which occupied the Mekong delta, conquered most of South Siam as well as much of the Malay Peninsula.

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7 Lawrence Palmer Briggs: The Ancient Khmer Empire, p.42.
8 JAOS, vol.65, 1945, p.104.
9 also Lou, Lvo, Lopburi, Lopburi, Lopaburi or Lavapura (Navapura). The Chinese called it Lo-hou or simply Lo. Lefèvre-Pontalis quotes the Vongseavadan Nuong Neng as saying that Louvo was founded by a son of the King of Takasila (Taksaśīla) in the last quarter of the 5th century. (JAOS, vol.65, 1945, p.103).
early in the third century A.D. According to Reginald Le
Hay even North-East of Siam appears at about that period to
have formed part of the Hinduized kingdom of Funan. There
was also the ancient country of Dvaravati or Dvaravadi
which extended over a large part of the region at the head
of the Gulf of Siam. It was originally a Mon Kingdom and was
Buddhist. It occupied the region around the north-east corner
of the head of the Gulf, near the mouth of the Meklong. The
land here was above the highest flood-level and the soil was
fertile. It was also free from the fevers of the Menam delta.
These natural advantages probably attracted the early Indian
immigrants to make their settlements in this area which also
became in Siam the most important centre of Indian culture
and civilization. "The earliest settlement of Dvaravati",
describes Briggs specifically of which we have knowledge was
at the present village of P'ong Tuk, a few miles north of the
head of the Bay, at the cross-roads between Petchaburi and
Ratchburi on the south, Kanburi and Muang-Sing on the west,
Uthong (Suphan ?) on the North and Nakhon Pathom on the East,
and about a day's march from each. Whatever may be the
accuracy of the distances there is little doubt about the
general position of the earliest Indian settlement. In 1927,
on receiving information about finds by the natives at P'ong
Tuk, the Royal Institute of Bangkok deputed its Secretary,

12 See also 'The Excavations at P'ong Tuk and Their
Importance for the Ancient History of Siam' by George Goedes
George Coedes, to investigate. Excavations revealed ruined monuments characteristic of Buddhism, particularly of the Thera-vada school. They show no resemblance to Khmer architecture and antedate the known advent of the Thai into this region by many centuries. As most of the inscriptions of Dvaravati and Louvo are in Mon and none in Khmer before the eleventh century A.D. nor in Thai at any time, Coedes holds that P'ong Tuk was an ancient Mon city and that it was abandoned before the Khmer conquest of this region in the eleventh century A.D. either due to an epidemic of cholera or a change in the course of the river Meklong.

Nothing definite is known about the relations of ancient Dvaravati and Funan. All that can be surmised is that Funan was the overlord. It was during the seventh century A.D. that the name Dvaravati first appeared in history. The Annals of the T'ang relate how during what was called the sheng-kuan era (A.D. 627-49), ambassadors from Po-li-lo-cha visited the Chinese Court. They also mention Te-houan-lo-p'o-ti as a vassal State of Burma (probably the Pyu) which is doubtful. Huen-Tsang, who visited India in the seventh century (A.D. 629-45), mentions the kingdom of To-lo-po-ti in his enumeration of eastern countries. I-Ching, writing in the latter part of the seventh century A.D., tells of a youth from the Annamite country who was taken as a boy to Tou-ho-louo-po-ti. These names: Po-li-lo-cha, Te-houan-lo-p'o-ti, To-lo-po-ti, and Tou-ho-louo-po-ti, are considered
transliterations of the Sanskrit name Dvaravati. From the geographical descriptions of the Chinese writers, Dvaravati seems to have embraced all the territory between Prome and Chenla, including the Irrawaddy and Sittang deltas, the region which the Pali writers call Ramanna-desa, the Mon country. Though it is well-known that the Mon country was under the hegemony of Sudhammapura (Thaton), yet probably in some earlier period Dvaravati was supreme with its capital at Pura Pa Thom (Nagara Pathama). Charles Duroiselle says that the Mons had conquered Prome from the Pyu and ruled over all of what is Lower Burma. Is it the overthrow of Pyu overlordship? The record in the T'ang Annals that Dvaravati (Te-houan-lo-p'ei-ti) was a vassal of P'iso (Pyu) may indicate this. The question requires further investigation.

The Mon kingdom of Dvaravati extended more to the east and north in the seventh century A.D. and founded a colony at Louvo. The latter developed into the kingdom of Louvo with its capital at Lopburi and began to overshadow old Dvaravati. Whether the capital was shifted from Nagara Pathama to Lopburi or Dvaravati and Louvo remained as two separate States no definite assertion can be made. An important event is that about the middle of the seventh century A.D. Lopburi in its turn founded a Mon settlement at Lamp'un; 17 miles south-east of Chieng-mai, on the Mae K'uang, a tributary of the

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13 Briggs: Dvaravati, the Most Ancient Kingdom of Siam, in JAS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 102. Coedes has restored T'ouan-lo-p'ei-ti as Dvaravati. Rev. E.J. Eitel in Chinese Buddhism has interpreted it as Dvarapati (Lord of the Gate). E.J. Thomas takes it to be same as Dvaravati (Dwaraka), the city of Krisna, in Kathiawar.
Meping in what is now north-western Thailand (Siam), it was then occupied by the Luanas, who were apparently animists, pure and simple with a primitive form of culture. This with other settlements side by side developed later as the Mon kingdom of Haripunjai (Haripunjaya). An account of the founding of this kingdom is contained in one of the Laoian Chronicles translated by the Pavie Mission of 1879-95. Pontalis, a French diplomat and later Minister to Siam who was with the Pavie Mission, believed that in A.D. 574 both Louvo and Haripunjai were Khmer kingdoms, but Coedès definitely established that these kingdoms were both Mon. Further, in the districts round Lamp' un, Lampang and P're, which is at a distance of 60 miles to the east of Lampang, Mon tradition is very strong even to this day and the seven inscriptions found at different temples in Lamp'un are all in Mon language and written in a script similar to that of the Mon inscriptions of Pagan. The earliest epigraphical evidence, however, does not take us back much beyond the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. The Homesa bird, which was the emblem of Mon sovereignty, is often found to adorn the summits of the flag-poles of the monasteries in this area. Two Chronicles in Pali, namely, Cama de vivamsa ("The History of Chama Devi") and Jinakalamalini ("The Garland of the Times of the Buddha"), translated and

14 JACOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 103.
15 Written by a monk named Bodhirsima early in the 15th century either at Chiengmai or Lamp' un. A large part of his narrative is of a legendary character.
16 Written by Ratanapanna, a monk of the Rattanavana Mahavihara monastery at Chiengmai in A.D. 1516.
annotated by Coedes a few years back, throw further light on the imperfect history of Lamp'un and its development. According to Jina-kalamanili, Cama Devi (Cham Tevi) was the daughter of the king of Louvo (Lavo) and married the king of Ramanna-nagara, which was undoubtedly the capital of Ramanna-desa or the Mon country of Lower Burma. She is said to have left her husband, probably as widow after her husband's death, about A.D. 661-3 and led a missionary expedition of emigrants from Loyburi to North Siam and founded Lamp'un. Her mission was probably the first to introduce Hinayana (Theravada) Buddhism in that region. There was a series of wars with the indigenous Lawas for the possession of the country. The History of Nang Kiam Maha Tevi also confirms that Nang Kiam (i.e., Nang Giam or Cam or Cama Devi) was the daughter of the king of Louvo. She held the title of Maha Tevi (Maha Devi). It is said that Cama Devi was already pregnant at the time of proceeding to Lamp'un, and soon after her arrival there, gave birth to two sons, one of whom became king of Lamp'un, and the other king of Lampang (K'elang). To this region of Lamp'un also flowed many Mon-speaking immigrants from Thaton and Pegu carrying with them Indianized culture and Buddhism of the Hinayana (Theravada) school and soon set up a Mon kingdom under the name of Haripunjai. In northern Siam no traces of an early Chinese influence are to be found except in the temple structure.

17 probably Thaton, the ancient seat of the Mon kingdom in Lower Burma.
Camadevivamse says that Cama Devi founded five monasteries in Lamp'um, one being the Mahayana. Reginald Le May says that there is still a temple of that name near the west gate of Lamp'um. Cama Devi is said also to have built another city at Alambanganapuri (Lampang Luang), 10 miles south-west of Lampang and erected a temple there which is one of the finest in Thailand. She retired to Haripunjai after her second son became king of K'selang and died.

About the end of the tenth century A.D., Louvo and Haripunjai were at war with each other and Tai Chronicles refer to it. Jinsakalalani also gives an account of this war. It says that Trabaka, the king of Lamp'un made an attack by river on the kingdom of Louvo (Lavo). When Uchittas-Cakkavatti, the king of Louvo, advanced with his army to meet him, Jivaka, king of Tambralinga, an Indianized Malay State on the Malay Peninsula, advanced northwards with a large force and many ships and seized Lopburi and conquered the kingdom of Louvo. Unable to enter his kingdom Uchittas-Cakkavatti fled towards Lamp'un and occupied it before Trabaka could arrive. The latter then made a second attempt to seize Louvo but it failed and he disappeared from the scene. It is further related in the Jinsakalalani that the king of Louvo invaded Lamp'un, but was repulsed with heavy losses. Briggs refers.

19 Tan-mei-liu, which is the Tambralinga of the Pali Middense, was an Indianized ancient kingdom, known to have been existing from the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. Its first formation is difficult to trace. The region of modern Ligor, then called Nakon Sri T'emmarat (Nagara Sri Dharmastra), was its centre.
to a Pali Chronicle of Western Laos as saying that, shortly after the conquest of Louvo (Lavo), a king named Kambujaraja tried to conquer Haripunjai, but was defeated and forced to flee.20 Who was this Kambujaraja? Nothing definite is known from the records. But Briggs is of the opinion that he was Jivaka's son Suryavarman I, king of Kambuja (Cambodian kingdom).21 This king's failure to conquer Haripunjai can also be inferred from several Khmer inscriptions which testify that he remained ruler of Louvo, while later inscriptions found at Haripunjai are in Mon. Suryavarman I, whose father came from Tambralinga, a centre of Mahayana Buddhism, is apparently a Buddhist of that school and with his advent Mahayana Buddhism found a place in Central Siam, while the Mon of Haripunjai were essentially Hinryanist and remained politically independent. From the Lopburi inscriptions of the first half of the eleventh century A.D. it appears that the Khmer kings also allowed Brahminical faiths to come into the kingdom. These inscriptions granted equal protection and privileges to both kinds of Buddhism and the various forms of Hinduism. The people followed the Buddhist faith but the royal Court was surrounded by Brahminical rites and ceremonies, though the king was Buddhist. The royal Buddhist monks, for instance, gave to Suryavarman I the posthumous name of Nirvanna Pada, while the Brahmins called him Suryavamsi, that is, one born of the god Sun and as possessing the grace of Visisnu.22

21 Ibid.
In the middle of the eleventh century A.D., the northern kingdom of Lemp'un suffered from a great calamity. Camadevivamsa contains an account of how an epidemic of cholera broke out in that region at that time and the people fled en masse to Thaton. But Anawrahta's invasion of that Mon country in A.D. 1057 drove many of them further to Hamsawadi (Hamsavati; Pegu) where they were welcomed by their brethren, because they spoke the same language, that is, Mon. The same Pali work also refers to the people of Lemp'un as Ramanna. Pongsawadon Yanaka records that when the epidemic subsided these people returned to Lemp'un and with them came many Mon-speaking people from Lower Burma who introduced the Mon script in northern Siam. It was from this script probably that the modern Lao script has been developed.

In A.D. 1001 Jibaka's son, Suryavarman I, found an opportunity to seize the throne of Cambodia at Angkor by virtue of his descent through his mother. Just at that time the Khmer throne was in dispute and he proceeded with a loyal band of followers either by the river Se Mun or by sea and landed in the eastern part of Cambodia. After a protracted civil war the ephemeral rule of the then ruling king Udavi-dityavarman I (A.D. 1001-2) was extinguished and Suryavarman I installed himself at Angkor in C.A.D. 1010. An inscription at Lopburi claims that Suryavarman's empire also included the Mon kingdom of Dvaravati and the Malay kingdom of Tambralinga, later Ligor. 23

23 Hall: A History of South-east Asia, p. 100.
The eleventh century was for the Khmers a period of violent civil strife, revolts and wars. It was Suryavarman II (A.D. 1113-50), the most powerful king of Khmer history, who not only restored stability to the empire, but also brought more territories under his sway by his conquests on the east and the west. But the Tai Chronicles say that his attempt to annex the Mon kingdom of Haripunjai was foiled. Hall points out that the Sang History described the Cambodian frontiers as the southern border of Champa, the sea in the south, the borders of Pagan in the west, and Celebes on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. Suryavarman II was the founder of the world-famous Angkor Wat (Temple of Angkor). 24

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24 It was conceived and dedicated to Vishnu. A gold statue of Vishnu is mounted on a garuda. Modern makes it clear that the Vishnu venerated in Angkor Wat was not the ancient Hindu god, nor one of his avatars, but the King Suryavarman II himself, identified with Vishnu after his death. The majestic shrine was erected in order to become his mausoleum when he died. The mausoleum is decorated with beautiful figures of apsaras just like Vishnu himself in his heavenly residence. The image of the king is seen on the bas-reliefs of the south gallery where he is twice represented, once seated in the midst of his court and the other time standing erect on his war elephant. The Wat to the most covers about 500 acres and the topmost tower is of 220 feet above the ground. Reginald Le Lay, who paid two visits to Angkor, says that "the Great Temple of Angkor dwarfs every other ancient building one is likely to see, and has no competitor for sheer magnificence and richness of decoration". Op. cit., pp. 98, 125, 134-5.
By the time Suryavarman II ascended the throne of Cambodia the Tai had already infiltrated into the Mekong valley and had settled in the State of Louvo. According to the Tai Chronicles Suryavarman II's campaigns against Louvo failed. But it is doubtful in view of the contemporary architecture of Lopburi expressing strong Khmer influence. The Khmer failure may be only a particular phase in the campaigns. But after Suryavarman II's death there was great unrest in the Khmer dominions. His son and successor Udayadityavarman II (A.D. 1050-66) had to deal with a series of revolts and also Cham interference in the south of the kingdom. But his redoubtable general Sangrama subdued them one after another. During his reign the great Pagan monarch conquered the 100 country of Thaton in A.D. 1057, and Wood says that he also attacked the Cambodian Empire and brought 'the whole of the present territory of Siam' under his sway. Hall also refers to a Thai tradition which asserts that Anawrahta extended his conquests as far as Lopburi and Dvaravati and that the Khmers had to recognize Burmese suzerainty over the conquered territories in Siam as the price of receiving back Lopburi. But he points out that there is nothing in support of this story in the epigraphical records and Burmese Chronicles. Anawrahta's missionary works, however, influenced Siam from Lopburi to Haripunjai.

Inspired probably by the Tai successes in the north under the leadership of Prince P'rolm, the Tai in Central Siam

25 Wood: op.cit., p. 50.
26 Hall: A History of South-east Asia, p. 101.
also became rebellious and threatened to overthrow the Cambodian rule in the middle of the thirteenth century. The King of Cambodia, Jayavarman VIII (A.D. 1243-95), sent General Khon Lamphong, the governor of the Upper Menam valley, to restore order. But two Tai Chiefs, Hpaw Khun Bang Klang Theo who had married a daughter of Jayavarman VII and Hpaw Khun Rpa Huang, rulers respectively of two petty States, Huang-Bang-Yang and Huang-Rat under Khmer sovereignty, rose in revolt. The cause of the rising is obscure. With the united strength of their forces the Tai Chiefs defeated the Khmer General in a pitched battle. They then launched simultaneous attacks on Sukhot'ai (Sukhodaya), the northern sub-capital of the Cambodian Empire, and its sister-city Sachanalai (Sajjanalaya), the name formerly given to Sawankalok (Svergaloka). They captured the two cities, which offered little resistance, and also wrested the northern part of the Western Cambodian Empire. At Sukhot'ai Hpaw Khun Bang Klang Theo, the Chief of

27 He ruled for the longest period in Khmer history, but was without any achievement as a ruler or a builder. He was notorious for committing 'acts of vandalisism on the Buddhist images'. Under him Brahman dominance was re-established.

28 Hall: A History of South-east Asia, p. 112. Jayavarman VII is supposed to have been the greatest of all Khmer monarchs. He was a Buddhist and under him Mahayana Buddhism became dominant in Cambodia. He introduced the Buddha-rama cult. His chief queen Jayarajadevi 'filled the earth with a shower of magnificent gifts'. He was the builder of Angkor Thom, an impregnable city fortified against Cham invasions, and also the Bayon. He ruled from about A.D. 1181 to 1218. One of his predecessors Jayavarman II, who ruled from A.D. 902 to 954, was the builder of the famous stone temple at Angkor Thom.

29 Reginald Le May: op.cit., p.169.
Bang-Yang, was crowned king under the title of Sri Indrapat-Indraditya (or Hkun Sri Indraditya or Int’arat’itya) by his friend and ally Hpaw Hkun Ip’a Muang. The title Sri Indrapat-Indraditya was originally given by the Cambodian King to Hpaw Hkun Ip’a Muang who transferred it to Hpaw Hkun Bang Klang Thea when the latter became king as recorded in the Sukhot’ai Inscription No. 2. The exact date of Sri Indraditya’s coronation is still a matter of controversy. According to Phya Anuman Rajadhon it is about A.D. 1252 or 1257. Sri Indraditya is identified with Sri Surya Phra Maha Dhammarajadhiraja of the Siamese Annals. His capital was Sajjanalaya Sukho-dynya.

The Western Cambodian Empire at that time had its capital at Lavo or the present Lopphaburi (Leepuri). Sukhot’ai was probably its western frontier town or sub-capital of strategic importance. What happened to Lopphuri when Hayien or Sukhot’ai-Sawank’alok fell? The question remains as yet unsolved. Probably it continued to maintain its precarious existence as a Khmer city until it was absorbed in the next century by the fast rising State of U-T’ong (Supanburi) under a prince descended from the famous Chiang-Sen Tai dynasty.

The Tai or Thai who conquered Sukhot’ai are called archaeologically Thai Noi i.e., Little or Minor Thai in contrast to the Siames who are called Thai Tai i.e., Great or Major Thai

30 Ibid., p. 169.
31 Personal Note from Phya Anuman Rajadhon.
vulgarly called Ngio, a word coming probably from the Ngwe Shan as called by the Burmese. Traditionally the Thai Noi are supposed to have come either from among the Thai of Chiangmai (Zimme) or from among the Lao of Muang Luang Phra Bang. But neither the Thai of Zimme nor the Lao call themselves Thai Noi. Yet the possibility of the Thai Noi being an offshoot of the Major Thai cannot be ruled out. It will be further discussed below.

The events in upper Central Siam leading to the historic conquest of Sukhotai by the Thai in the middle of the thirteenth century were followed by a fresh development in the north, A Lu (Tai) prince named Meng Rai, who succeeded his father as king of Chiang-Sen in A.D. 1259, commenced a brilliant series of campaigns subjugating northern Siam. Reginald Le May says that Meng Rai (or Meng Rai) was born in A.D. 1239 and was the son of the last Lava Chief of Chiang-Sen by a Tai mother. Legend says that he was born under miraculous circumstances and possessed superhuman qualities. But this prince is always regarded by the Tai as a Tai and was the son-in-law of the Lu (Tai) prince of Kong-Mung (or Chiang-Rung). He was a Buddhist. He moved up a southern tributary of the Mekong and founded Chiang Rai after his own name in A.D. 1263. He then founded Muang-Fang in A.D. 1273, after which he crossed the divide to the upper Meping. In this campaign

34 Reginald Le May: op. cit., p. 167.
of conquest in A.D. 1237 Meng Rai suddenly came into a violent clash with Pareru, the Tai ruler of the kingdom of Martaban, which included Thaton and Pegas, over a frontier dispute as referred to above. The dispute was peacefully settled in the end. In A.D. 1292 he captured the Mon capital Lamp'un, thus putting an end to the kingdom of Haripunjai, which was until then a vassal state of Cambodia. He founded there the famous kingdom of Lannat'ai36 (Chieng-mai), called Pa-pe or Pa-pai-hai-fu by the Chinese and Yonakarattha in the Pali Chronicles, and established his first new capital at Wieng Khamen (or Kham-kam), the remains of which, says Wood, can still be seen five miles from Chieng-mai. But as this site was a lowland and subject to inundation, in A.D. 1296 he transferred the capital to the present city of Chieng-mai, after selecting the site in co-operation with his brother princes, Ram Kambaeng of Sukhottai and K'un Ngam Munang of P'ayo. 37 By his conquests Prince Meng Rai made himself master of the major part of north Siam and his kingdom Lannat'ai comprised Chieng-mai, Lamp'un, Nak'on Lamp'eng, Chieng Rai, Chieng Sen and the State of Keng-tung (then called K'emerat). The only other independent State under a powerful ruler in the north-western part of Siam at that time was P'ayo. P'ayo was originally a small independent Thai principality, which came into existence in A.D. 1096 and whose location was at the junction of the Meping and the

37 Wood: op.cit., p.56.
Kewaag rivers. 38 But by A.D. 1296 it rose to be one of the three powerful States not subject to Cambodia.

The impact of the Mongols was felt by the Tai kingdoms of the south soon after the conquest of China by Kublai Khan (Emperor Shih Tsu). Haughty embassies were sent by Kublai Khan to these kingdoms demanding submission. His relations with Siam were two-fold: in the south, by sea with Seien (or Siam = Syam, Sukhot'ai in Central Siam) and Lu-bu (or Lo-hou, Lavo, Louvo, Lavapura or modern Lopburi in the old Mon kingdom of South Siam or Dvaravati); in the north, by land with Pa-pai-hsi-fu (Lan-na or Yonakarattha) of which Chiang-mai was the capital and Ch'e-li (Chiang-Rung or Keng-Rung and the Hsip-Hsawng-Pan-na), the country of the Lu (Tai) people. 39 According to the Yuan-shih, as translated by Pelliot, the Mongol Emperor established his first contact with Lo-bu in A.D. 1239 and with Seien in A.D. 1292 through Canton. Ram Khemhaong was then the ruler of the Seien country. In the north the first invasion of Pa-pai-hsi-fu was led in A.D. 1292-93 by Mengu Turumish. Under pressure of repeated attacks by the Mongols 'Great Ch'e-li' (Chiang-Rung) submitted in A.D. 1296, but 'Little Ch'e-li', said to lie to the east, or rather south-east, and called by the Tai Lannat'ai, resisted refusing to become a part of Ch'e-li or according to the Mongols revolted. 40 The Mongol conquerors then organized the

38 Hall: A History of South-east Asia, p.144.
39 Luce's "The Early Syam in Burma's History" in JSS, XLVI, 2, 1958, p.139.
40 JACOB, vol.69, 1949, p.71; also Non-Schao ye-tohe, 118, 120-2.
Hsip-Hseung-Panma region as the Chinese province of Ch'ei-li (Ch'e-li). It is noteworthy that, probably in anticipation of a possible Mongol danger, in A.D. 1297, the year of the destruction of Pagan by the Mongols and their Shan allies, the three potentates Meng-Hai, Ram Khamhaeng and Ngam Muang, the Chief of P'ayao, met together and concluded a pact of friendship. The pact was apparently to establish a strong Tai confederacy to resist the Mongols on the one hand and fight the Cambodians on the other. Lannat'ai's power to resist the Mongols may be traced to this pact. It appears that Mongol suzerainty, if it was extended at all to the Tai kingdoms of Northern and Central Siam, was only nominal.

In September, 1297, on the other hand, Pa-pai-hsi-fu (Lannat'ai) invaded Chinese Great Ch'e-li. There is mention of a Chinese expedition of February, 1301 against Pa-pai-hsi-fu, for which the Emperor gave paper money reckoned altogether at over 92,000 'Shoes' (ting in Chinese or Tai). On May 1st, of that year 'the Emperor moved the Yun-nan army to invade Pa-pai-hsi-fu'. Those persons of Yun-nan, who volunteered to go on the expedition, were given 60 strings of cowries each. Even the various 'southern barbarians' on the borders of Pa-pai-hsi-fu agreed among themselves not to pay taxes and imposts to the Chinese authorities, and they robbed and killed the government officials under the Chinese. On account of the ruin of the expeditionary army in the war in April, 1303, the Emperor put to death Liu Shen, and sentenced to flogging Ho-la-tai and Cheng Yu. There were raids and counter-offensives by Pa-pai-hsi-fu and Great and Little Ch'e-li from time to time.
for the next seven or eight years until in March 1312 Pa-pai-hsi-Au appears for the first time to have offered as tribute two tame elephants. Raids and temporary submissions on the part of the Tai States on the borders of Siam went on for many years as described in the ren-chi of the Yung-shih.

The relations between the Tai rulers of Siam and the Chinese imperial authority of that time can be inferred from certain facts. There is, for instance, no mention anywhere of Meng-Rai, the King of Lannat'ai, visiting the Chinese Court. He only visited Pagan in A.D. 1290, which was then ruled over by Shan (Tai) Chiefs under nominal suzerainty of China. He brought back from Pagan a number of artists and artisans for his kingdom. Under Pagan's influence he was also inspired to found in A.D. 1292 the temple of Chieng-man at Chieng-mai.

The son and successor of Indraditya was Ram Kambaeng (C. 1279 - C. 1317) of Sukhothai, whose full title being Pho Khan Ram Kambaeng Chao Mura Sri Sajanaaya Sukhothay. He maintained cordial relations with China. The Chinese Annals say that he paid two visits to the Imperial Court, the first in A.D. 1294 while Kublai Khan was alive, and second in A.D. 1300. During his second visit he married a Chinese princess. While returning from China he brought to Sukhot'ai Chinese potters. It is recorded in the Chinese dynastic histories that in A.D. 1289, 1292, 1295 and 1299 Lo-bou (Louvo), Sien (Sukhothai) and Pape sent embassies to the Mongol Court. Chinese embassies

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41 Indraditya had three sons, of whom Ram Kambaeng ("Rama the Brave") was the youngest.
also visited the Court of Ram Kamhaeng in A.D. 1293 and
1295 with imperial orders. He paid tribute to
the Emperor regularly all through his reign and also applied
for Chinese white horses with saddles and bridles and also
gold-thread garments as had been given to his father. Ram
Kamhaeng was a great statesman and a brave soldier.

The details of Ram Kamhaeng's dominions are known
from a postscript to his inscription. According to the
postscript account his dominions extended northwards up to
Luang Phra Bang (Pa re), Luang Phen, Luang P'ine on the river Men,
and on the other side of the Mekong up to Luong Cheva (Luang
Phra Bang) which marks the frontier; southwards they extended
to the sea and included Sup'annaphum, Ratburi, P'echaburi and
Si Thammarat (Ligor); westwards they reached up to Luang Chot
(Me Sot) and the sea; and eastwards, as far as Vieng-Chau and
Vieng-Khian which marks the frontier. He also established his
suzerainty over Pog-u and Martaban when Narern had to acknowledge
his overlordship. But Wood in his History of Siam points out
that 'it must not be assumed that King Ram K'amhaeng exercised
effective control over all these regions. For instance, the
Prince of Sup'an had by this time already attained to a powerful
position, and the Tai rulers of Loyburi and the ancient city of

42 Pelliot : Deux itineraires, 240-4.
43 Reginald Le May : op. cit., p.70.
44 Hall gives a translation (vide his A History of
South-east Asia, pp.147-49) of Coedes's French version in Les
Etat hindouises, p.342.
Ayodhia (both related to King Ramk'amheng) were either independent or were subject to the King of Cambodia.

Ram Kammaeng extended his conquests to the Malay Peninsula in A.D. 1294 and subjugated a considerable part of it then under the Empire of Srivijaya. The Tai had already penetrated into that region about the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. and since then intercourse had been maintained by them with Sukhot'ai. Had it not been for the Chinese imperial intervention, probably the whole of the Peninsula would have come under the rule of Sukhot'ai. The Yuan Shih says that 'the people of Hsien and Ma-li-yu-erh (Malayu) had long been quarrelling and fighting with each other. Now both submitted'. Ram Kammaeng's attack on the northern possessions of Srivijaya had begun about A.D. 1280 as recorded in the Mon Chronicles. The new Emperor, Ch'eng Tsung, ordered Hsien: 'Do not injure Ma-li-yu-erh. Do not trample on your promise.' On February 2, 1299, Hsien, Mo-la-yu (i.e. Ma-li-yu-erh) and Lo-hu came to the imperial Court together, and the Crown Prince of Hsien was specially honoured. In the Chinese record Sukhot'ai is mentioned by name as Su-lo-tai when on June 15, 1299 several embassies of southern sea came to the Chinese Court with tributes of tigers, elephants and boats made of shu-lo wood. One of these embassies, that of Hsien, is described in the 'Section on Hsien' in the Yuan-Shih.

Malayu (Malay-Land) is known to have been the first Hindu kingdom established in Djambi in Sumatra in
A.D. 644. A short time afterwards the Buddhist kingdom of
Srivijaya in the Palembang River valley of Sumatra became
powerful and conquered Malaya and Bencoolen and gained a foot-
hold on the Malaya Peninsula. This expansion of Srivijaya
is attributed to king Jayanasa (Jayanaga). The famous
Chinese Buddhist pilgrim I-tsing (I-Ching), while on his
way to India, came on a Persian ship to Srivijaya and spent
six months there studying Sanskrit. He then made his onward
voyage to India in a ship belonging to the king of Sri-
vijaya. During his stay at Srivijaya he found there over a
thousand Buddhist monks. Mahayana Buddhism, mixed up with
Tantric mysticism, was the prevailing religion of the kingdom,
the source of which may be traced to Nalanda of the period
of the Pala dynasty of Bengal and Magadha. The Chinese royal
edict of A.D. 695 mentions ambassadors from Srivijaya.

It is important to note that the Ligor (Vieng Sa)
stele, bearing a Saka date corresponding to 15 April 775,
at the Wat Sema-muang contains ten Sanskrit verses commemo-
rating the foundation of a Mahayanist sanctuary and celebra-
ting certain victories by a king of Srivijaya of the
Sailendra family, thus indicating Srivijaya's conquest of
the Malaya Peninsula. The Arabs found in A.D. 844 a powerful
kingdom, called Zabag, or later Javaka, in the Malaya Penin-
sula with its capital in the Ligor (Sritemmarat) region of
which the king styled himself 'The Maharaja'. In the eleventh

45 Edwin M. Loeb and Robert Heine-Geldern: Sumatra,
(Vienna, 1938), p.7.
century A.D., the Sailendras were still ruling over Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, though they had lost Java. King Chandrabhanu of Javaka twice invaded Ceylon in A.D. 1236 and 1256 without success. Though Dvaravati continued to exist in the eighth century A.D., its influence was not in evidence from that time in the south, where inscriptions in Sanskrit or Khmer are only found between the eighth and twelfth centuries A.D. Srivijaya, with Malayu as its subject State, continued to flourish until in the last decade of the thirteenth century the Tai pressure from the north ousted its authority from the northern part of the Malay Peninsula.

Sukhothai under Ram Khamhaeng is called the 'cradle of Siamese civilization'. The king was a devout Buddhist and adopted Thera-vada Buddhism as the official religion. This he did by inviting a renowned teacher of Sinhalese Buddhism from Makon Sritammarat. There were venerable monks and a Mahathera who had their residence to the east of the city where there were temples. The king could be approached by all his subjects for the redress of their grievances. "Go ringing the bell which has been hung up" was the order for calling the king who decides every case righteously. He was the ideal king of Siam. In A.D. 1283 Ram Khamhaeng instituted the present Thai alphabet and its earliest specimen is exhibited in the Stone Inscription of the same monarch, now

47 The translation and transcription of this Inscription are given in (i) Le Siem Ancien of M. Fournereau, (ii) Etudes diverses of the Pauie Mission, (iii) Dr. Bradley in JSS (1909) and (iv) MEFE-0. 1916.
preserved in the National Museum, Bangkok. Until his time various forms of the Cambodian alphabet had been in use in Siam. The alphabet of King Ram Khamhaeng was adopted throughout Siam, including the Chiang-mai dominions. The inscription is on a large flat slab of stone set in masonry on the terrace beside the ruins of an old palace at Sukhotai. The stone was an object of reverence and fear to all the people. It was brought to Bangkok in A.D. 1838 by King Maha Mongkut while he was a priest. Dr. O. Frankfurter remarks that it is a typical Buddhist inscription, recording not so much deeds of war and conquest, but the happiness which the people of the realm enjoyed in the reign of Phra RamKhamhaeng, what he did for the culture of the people, how he understood the Buddhist religion, what are the maxims of Government by which he was guided, how he was the first to use the written Thai character for record."

'Though modelled on the Indian one', says Phya Anuman Rajadhon, 'through the medium of the Khmer or Cambodian characters, the Thai alphabet differs from the Indian and the Cambodian sources'. The Stone Inscription of Ram Khamhaeng in the National Museum, Bangkok, first presents this early form of Thai alphabet.

It is presumed that the majority of Ram Khamhaeng's subjects, particularly in the southern part of his realm,
were Mons and Khmers. While Ram Kambaeng established his
dominion over western Thailand (Siam), which was until then
under the Khmers; on the east, Louvo regained independence
in the beginning of the last decade of the thirteenth century,
or probably earlier, as evident from the Chinese records
mentioning embassies from that State. Louvo continued to
exist as an independent State to the middle of the fourteenth
century when it was absorbed by the Thai kingdom of Ayuthia.

How much of culture and civilization Thailand owes
to Cambodia and hence indirectly to India is indicated by
Goedes who wrote thus: 'From Cambodia the Siamese assimil­
ated its political organization, material civilization,
writing and a considerable number of words. Siamese artists
learn from Khmer artists and transformed Khmer art according
to their own genius, and above all under the influence of
their contact with their western neighbours, the Mons and
Burmese. From these latter the Siamese received their juristic
tradition, of Indian origin, and above all Sinhalese Buddhism
and its artistic tradition'. 50 This is true of the Thai even
to-day. But for this inherent power of assimilating the
elements of progress, discovered in the new environments,
and yet maintaining distinctive national identity, the Thai
would have long fallen into the background and lost the
position that they occupy to-day.

50 Les 'Etats hindouises, p. 370 (Translated by
Hall in his A History of South-east Asia, p. 147).
The tradition is that Ram Kambaeng lost his life in the rapids of the river at Samk'kalok and this happened about A.D. 1317, and in this year also died King Meng-Rai of Chiang-mai. The throne was then occupied by his son Loe T'ai. Loe T'ai is comparatively an obscure figure. That he was an utterly weak and incompetent ruler is proved by his inability to defend his father's dominions. Immediately after his accession the king of Pegu threw off his allegiance and attacked and occupied Tavoy and Tenasserim. Loe T'ai also proved absolutely no match for the rising power of U-T'ong. The Prince of U-T'ong annexed large portions of the dependencies of the independent Sukhothai kingdom without any strong action by Loe T'ai. According to Wood Loe T'ai died in A.D. 1347 and was succeeded by his son Lu T'ai, who was until then Phra Mahâ-Uparaja (the great Viceroy) at Sri Sajanâlaya and had to march with a force and occupy the throne by overcoming the rebels and conspirators. He was also known as Hrdaya Raja. On account of his great devotion to religion he was called Sri Dhammaraja. The Brahmins and mantrins consecrated him and gave him the title of Phra Bat Somdet Phra Chao Kemraten an Sri Suryavamsa Rama Maha Dhamnikarajadhiraja. During his reign the power and glory of Sukhothai rapidly declined and she lost her independence.

Lu T'ai was also a scholar. He wrote a book called Traibhumikatha (Traiphum P'a Ruang) in A.D. 1345. He was a specialist in the science of astronomy and corrected the calendar. Under his rule both Buddhism and Hinduism flourished in the kingdom, both Sramanas and Brahmins were respected. He
tried to conduct the people on the way to Nirvan, and constructed many Kuti-Viharas (monasteries) and a Cetiya (cōitya, stupa) to enshrine the sacred relics. He set up a statue of the Buddha made of different metals and consecrated two statues of Hindu gods, one of Parsamesvara and the other of Vismu, in the devalaya of Mahakaśatra. He studied both Buddhist and Brahminical scriptures. He invited a Siplacarya of Ceylon called Mahasami Sangharaja to his capital and received him with great respect. On an appointed day, the king invited to his royal palace (hema presada raja mandira) the Mahasami Sangharaja and the whole assembly of therag and bhikṣus for taking the pabbajja. The king sat bowing down before the golden image of Lord Buddha and said - 'I thus enter into the religion of our Lord Buddha. I do not either desire Cakravartisampatti or Indrasampatti or Brahmāsampatti etc.' He desired to become a Buddha and to take every creature beyond the ocean of the affliction of transmigration. Even as a ruler he tried to become a living ideal of ahimsa showing kindness to all creatures and forgiving offenders instead of punishing them according to law. While thus religion dominated the minds and hearts of these later rulers, the administration became too weak to deal effectively with the enemies internal and external, and the kingdom succumbed to the newly growing political forces of

51 The title of Semi or Mahasami was conferred by the king of Ceylon on foreign Bhikṣus, who came there to study Sinhalese Buddhism. The present Mahasami came to Sukhot'ai probably from Pegu where he lived after obtaining the title.

52 quoted by Bose in his The Indian Colony of Siam, p.47

53 Hall's translation of Coedes's French version.
the time. According to the Brahmins, the Sukhot'ai dynasty was of the famous Surya Vamsa, and Lu T'ai was known by the Brahminical title Sri Suryavamsa Rama.

THE KINGDOM OF AYUTTHIA:

Early in the fourteenth century A.D., a Mon king was ruling at U-T'ong (near the modern town of Sup'an) over a remnant of the old kingdom of Dvaravati. A Lu prince of Chiang-Sen, a scion of the illustrious royal family to which Meng-Rai belonged, wandered down the Mekong to Southern Siam and set up a small kingdom at or in the neighbourhood of the ancient capital Phra Pathana and married the daughter of the old Mon king of U-T'ong. On the death of the latter, the throne of U-T'ong fell vacant, probably for want of an heir, and the deceased king's son-in-law, the Lu prince of the neighbouring kingdom, then succeeded to it and became P'ya U-T'ong (Prince of U-T'ong).

The old Mon king of U-T'ong was a great warrior, who, during the reign of Ram Kammaeng's immediate unwarlike successor Loe T'ai (A.D. 1317-47), subjugated the southern dominions of Sukhot'ai, particularly Nak'on Srit'ammarat (Ligor), Ratburi, P'techuburi, Tenasserim and Tavoy. When his son-in-law, the young Chao, became the king of U-T'ong with the title P'ya U-T'ong, this Mon kingdom rapidly developed into a powerful Tai kingdom absorbing Sukhot'ai and a large part of the Cambodian territory in the Menam delta and extending suzerainty over the Tai principalities of the central Mekong valley.
In A.D. 1350, this young Chao of U-T'ong founded a new capital at Ayuthia, 45 miles north of Bangkok and on an island formed by the confluence of three rivers, the Pa Sak and two tributaries of the Menam Chao P'ya. It is said to be on or near the site of the ancient city of Dvaravati. The Sanskrit name of the capital in full is said to have been 'Dvaravati Sri Ayodhya' or Thavarawadi Sri Ayudhya of Prince Dhami Hivat.

The formal accession of this prince at the new capital Ayuthia is described in the P'ra Raj P'onsawadan Chabab P'ra Raj Hat'alek'a as follows:— "On Friday the 6th waxing moon of the 6th Siamese month (April), in year of the Tiger, the 2nd year of the decade, of Sakkaraj 712 (A.D. 1350), at the auspicious hour given by the Brahman astrologers, the city of P'ra Nakon Ayut'ia (Nagara Ayodhya) was built and Phra Chao Ut'ong came from Sup'anburi (Suvarnapuri) and ascended the throne at Ayut'ia at the age of 37. The Brahmins proclaimed his title as Somdet Phra Rama T'ibodi Sri Sunt'on Bhor Bop'it (Ramadhipati Sri Sundara Paramapavittra), King of Krong T'eb Maha Nak'on Rowon T'varawadi Sri Ayut'ia Mahadilok P'obnop'arat Rajat'ani Burim (Deva-Nagara Maha Nagara Pravarva Dvaravati Sri Ayodhya Mahatiloka Bhava Navaratna Raja-dhani Puriramya), in the same style as the Somdet Phra Ramnarai who ascended the throne in Ayuthia in ancient days". 54

(the reference here is to Rama and Ayodhya of the famous Indian epic).

This first king of Ayut'ia is more commonly known as Rama T'ibodi Suvarnaddola, The last part of his name Suvarnadola is exactly the popular equivalent of U-T'ong. It should be known that the names of the kings of Siam are generally titles rather than real names. It was customary not to refer to a Siamese king by his name during his lifetime. Wood informs us that each king had his full style and title inscribed on a golden plate, but these were all lost when Ayuthia was destroyed by the Burmese in A.D. 1767.

Then he conferred on K'un-Luang-P's-angsa, who was the elder brother of his chief queen and whom he called his elder brother, the title of Somdet Phra Borom Rajat'irat-Chao and appointed him as ruler of Muang Sup'ambari. He sent his son Phra Ramesuan to rule over Muang Lopburi.

According to Phra Raj Pongsawadee Chabab Phra Raj Nat'alek' at the time of his accession to the throne at Ayuthia Rama T'ibodi I held sway over the following towns: Halaka (Melacca), Jawa (Java), Tanosri (Tenasserim), T'awai (Tavoy), Martana (Martaban), Mawlamyeng (Moulmein), Songkil, Chantabun (Cendrapura), P'itsanulok (Visanulok), Sukhot'ai (Sukhodaya), P'ichai (Vijaya), Sawank'alok (Svergaloa), P'ichit (Vicitra), Kamp'eng'et (Kamboj Vajra), and Nakh'on.

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55 U-T'ong in popular sense means 'a golden cradle' (Suvarnadola) because the prince was given a cradle of gold by his father. But Prince Damrong says that U-T'ong is simply the Siamese equivalent of Suvarnabhumi (Supan).

56 Parama Rajadhiraja-Chao.

57 Ramesawara.
Sawen (Nagara Sverga). Wood says that he was the first king of Siam to rule over the Malay State.

When Ayuthia was founded in A.D. 1350, the Tai principalities of the central Mekong valley were dependencies of Sukhothai, which the year before (A.D. 1349) had become subject to Ayuthia. In the second half of the fourteenth century A.D., two other independent Tai kingdoms flourished in the north and they were the Yunn kingdom of Lan-nà with Chieng-mai as its capital and the Lao kingdom of Lan-Chang or Laos in the middle Mekong valley. The kingdom Lan-nà maintained its separate existence for several centuries, acknowledging at different times the suzerainty of Lan-Chang, Burma and Siam. It was annexed to Siam finally in the second half of the nineteenth century. Regarding the Lao kingdom it may be noted that from early in the second half of the thirteenth century the Laoans (Pai-yi), moving into the middle Mekong valley from the north, established their principalities at Muong-Swa (later Luang-Phra-bang), Muong-Po-Bun (Tran-Ninh), and Vieng-Chen (Vientiane). At first the Tai of these areas were under the suzerainty of Angkor and later under that of Sukhothai.

**THE KINGDOM OF LAOS**

But in A.D. 1353 the energetic Tai prince of Muong-Swa named Fa Ngoun (or Fa Ngom), with the assistance of the king of Cambodia, deposed his grand-father, and consolidated...
the small Laotian principalities of the Mekong from the
border of Non-Chao to Cambodia and declared his independence
of Sukhot'ai. He seized the plateau of Korat and much of
what is now Siamése Laos in defiance of Rama T'ibodi I of
Ayuthia and established the independent Laotian kingdom of
Lan-Chang. Fa Ngoun was renowned for his military prowess
and earned the title of "the Conqueror". On the west, his
extensive kingdom touched the territories of Chiang-mai and
Ayuthia and on the east those of Annam and Champa.

The Tai of this kingdom had already come under
the influence of Indian culture through Angkor and Sukhot'ai
and under Fa Ngoun they were converted to Hinayana Buddhism.
Fa Ngoun had been brought up at the Court of Angkor and
was married to a Khmer princess. A mission of monks, sent to
him by his father-in-law, presented to him the Pali scriptures and a
famous statue of the Buddha called the Phra-Bang, which had been originally sent by the king of Ceylon as a
present to the Cambodian king. It was installed at Lan-Chang in
a temple specially built for it. The city was later named after
it as Luang Phra-bang.

Fa Ngoun, being essentially a soldier, ruled as
an autocrat, and drained so much of blood and toil of his
subjects for his ambitious plans of conquest that he became
extremely unpopular, until in A.D. 1373 he was exiled by
his ministers and his son Oun Hneun, a young men of seventeen,

60 "The Appearance etc." by Briggs in JAOS, vol. 69,
No. 2, 1949, p. 73.
61 Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p. 207.
placed on the throne. The young king assumed the official title of P'aya Sam Sene and became known as the 'Lord of 300,000 T'ais', the latter being a figure which he obtained from the census of the male population of his kingdom made by him after three years of his accession. He was married to a Siamese princess of Ayuthia. He reorganized the administrative system on an efficient basis and in this he was influenced by the Siamese methods. He also built temples and schools and encouraged the study of Buddhism. He maintained good relations with his neighbours and under him the country became prosperous and happy.

In A.D. 1421 the Chinese invaded Annam. The great Yung-Lo (1403-1424) of the Ming was then the Emperor of China. King Lan-Kham-Deng (1416-28) of Lan-Chang sent a force to the assistance of the Annamites in their defence, but unfortunately it went over to the Chinese. But the Annamites beat the treacherous Laotians back into their own country, but could take no further action immediately as they were defeated and held in subjection by the Chinese until A.D. 1428. This opportunity was seized by the Chams to recover their province of Indrapura (Quang-nam) from the hands of the Annamites who had annexed it in A.D. 1402. But in A.D. 1428 the great Annamite leader Le Lo'i liberated his country from the Chinese, proclaimed himself King of Annam and founded what was called the second Le dynasty. To avoid friction he accepted the nominal suzerainty of China then under the powerful Ming and initiated friendly relations with the erstwhile enemy.
Champa obviously to rebuild the shattered strength of his country. But later civil war weakened Champa and Annam delivered the decisive blow in A.D. 1471 and annexed her down to Cap Varella leaving only a small chunk beyond it which, too, she absorbed finally in A.D. 1720. Annam became now an empire and the Chams were either largely exterminated or were driven into the mountains. Having thus quashed Champa Annam turned on Lan-Chang whose past betrayal she remembered. Le Thanh-Ton (1460-97), the greatest Le monarch of Annam, in A.D. 1478, made a violent attack on Lan-Chang and drove its king, P'aya Sai Tiakap'at (1438-79), into exile.

But a son of the exiled king, T'ene Kham, rallied the Laos forces and drove out the Annamites. He then succeeded to the throne and reorganized the country on a far more efficient basis which rapidly brought prosperity to the people. T'ene Kham was not only a matchless warrior but also showed great statesmanship in the management of the country's affairs. His policy was to strengthen the position of his country by promoting better relations with the powerful neighbour Annam. As a result the Laos people enjoyed a long period of peace during which commercial relations were developed with the Henam valley and the kingdom prospered. The peace was seriously affected in A.D. 1545 when the Laos...
king P'ot'isarat (1520-47) meddled in the succession question of Chieng-mai. Prince T'ai-Sai-K'äm of Chieng-mai seized the throne in A.D. 1538 by deposing his father Muang-Kesa, the fifteenth king of that country in the direct line from Meng-Rai. But his misrule and tyranny became so unbearable that a serious rebellion broke out and he was killed in A.D. 1543. King Muang-Kesa was then restored to the throne by the nobles, but after two years he became insane and was assassinated by a group of conspirators headed by one Sen Dao. Sen Dao, who became master of the situation for the moment, selected the Prince of Keng-tung as the next successor, but the latter declined the offer. The throne was then offered to Prince Nai-t'i of Muang-nai, a 'descendant of Prince K'run, one of the sons of king Mengrai, the founder of Chiengmai'. But the nobles opposed to Sen Dao met at Chieng-Sen and made a powerful counter-move requesting the Laos king to accept the throne of Chieng-mai for his eldest son, Prince Jai Jett'a (or Sett'at'irat), then a boy of twelve, whose mother was a Chieng-mai Princess.

The chief men of the kingdom immediately appointed a regent in the person of a very capable princess called Maia T'ewi.

When this Chieng-mai was in trouble king P'rajai of Ayuthia appeared on the scene with an army apparently to punish Sen Dao, the murderer of Muang-Kesa. But Princess

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64 Wood : op.cit., p.103.
65 Jyestadhikaraj ?
66 Wood : op.cit., p.104. Hall says Chieng-mai princess was the mother of P'ot'isarat. Probably Wood is right.
Maha T'ewi somehow averted war by persuading him to retire without a blow as Sen Den was no longer in power. As soon as P'raja left Chieng-mai Prince Makut'i of Muang-Nai with the help of the Prince of Yawngwe invaded Chieng-mai with the intention of seizing the throne, but the invaders were beaten back by the Regent Maha T'ewi. Soon a powerful army from Lan-Chang arrived to defend Chieng-mai for the Laos prince who was to succeed. The prospect of Prince Sett'at'irat's succession to the throne of Chieng-mai then became a certainty. To P'raja it appeared as a matter of grave concern as it would mean extension of Laotian power to North Siam. He therefore proceeded with a large army to intervene in the succession question. This time Princess Maha T'ewi put up a stout resistance and repulsed the Siamese army. As the army retreated to Ayuthia it was harassed and routed on the way by the Laos army which was already there. 67

During King P'raja's absence his palace became a hell of scandals and intrigues. On arrival home he was poisoned to death in A.D. 1547 by his notorious non-royal consort T'ao Sri Sudachen who had in the meantime become pregnant by a lover. What followed afterwards has already been related. Prince Sett'at'irat (also called Prince Jai Jett'a) was crowned as Maharaja of Chieng-mai shortly after P'raja's death. He ruled at Chieng-mai only for two years when by a hunting accident his father P't'isarat died. P't'isarat

was a firm believer in Buddhism. He tried to eradicate primitive beliefs in animism among his subjects and establish the pure form of Buddhism, but the experiment did not quite succeed. He was the first Laotian King to develop the commercially more advantageous city of Vieng-Chan (Vientiane) considerably down the Mekong. His death created a scramble for the partition of the kingdom among his other sons. Sett'at'irst preferred to leave Chieng-mai to go and save his paternal kingdom from disintegration. With his departure Chieng-mai was again reduced to a cock-pit of rival pretenders to the throne. Sett'at'irst announced his intention of remaining at Luang P'rabang (Lon-Cheng). The chieftains of Chieng-mai then brought in Prince Mekut'1 of Muang-Nai and installed him as Maharaja in A.D. 1549.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the rise of Bayin Naung put the whole Tai world from the Mekong valley to the sea in jeopardy. During his conquests of the Shan States of Hei-Paw and Hong-Nai (Lon) in A.D. 1556 he found that Maharaja Mekut'1 was assisting the Shans. Though actually he was aiming at Chieng-mai in this expedition he made it a pretext to invade Chieng-mai in the same year. He besieged Chieng-mai and the city fell after a few days' resistance. Maharaja Mekut'1 had to accept the suzerainty of Burma with a Burmese army of occupation stationed in.

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68 According to Hall the hunting accident with death of Pat'isarat occurred in A.D. 1547 but according to Wood it should be 1549. 1547 was approximately the date of Sett'at'irst's accession in Chieng-mai. Hence there is a difference of two years between the dates given by Hall and Wood.
Chieng-mai, Mekut'!: also agreed to pay an annual tribute of elephants, horses, silks and other valuable products of his country.

On Bayin Naung's return to Pegu, Sett'at'irat invaded Chieng-mai and by A.D. 1558 would have overthrown his old rival Mekut', but the situation was saved at the critical hour by the reappearance of Bayin Naung with a large Burmese army. Bayin Naung not only drove out the invaders from Luang P'rabang, but also proclaimed the deposition of Sett'at'irat from the throne of Luang P'rabang. Faced with this serious threat from the greatest Burmese conqueror, he formed a large confederation of Shan States. Sett'at'irat then led an expedition against Chieng-SEN. But Bayin Naung's rapid occupation of the territories of some of the Shan allies of Sett'at'irat led to the liquidation of his defensive organization after a year and Sett'at'irat gave up the expedition.

Though at the fall of Chieng-mai other Shan chiefs of the neighbouring States hastened to acknowledge the suzerainty of Burma, Sett'at'irat did not submit and tried to strengthen his position by alliances with other independent Shan States. Bayin Naung returned to Pegu without invading Luang P'rabang. The cause for it is not known. He might have returned for more urgent call from home. As the Burmese danger became very real and may come at any moment in the near future Sett'at'irat made an alliance with Ayuthia and secondly transferred his capital to Vieng-CHAN (Vientiane) which was built up with strong fortifications.
was more conveniently situated for intercourse with Siam away from Burmese interference. He also erected a famous shrine in the new capital and installed in it the celebrated Emerald Buddha (P'ra-Keo) which he had taken away to Luang P'rabang from Chieng-mai while finally leaving that city. His That Luong, a pyramidal structure, still remains the finest monument of Lao architecture, though partly damaged by raiders from Yun-nan as late as A.D. 1873.

Bayin Naung's supreme ambition was to become the overlord of all the Tai States. It was partly fulfilled by his conquests of the Tai (Shan) States of Burma and subjugation of Chieng-mai. His arms were now turned to efface the existence of Ayuthia and Luang P'rabang as independent kingdoms. For an attack on Ayuthia he can now use Chieng-mai as the spring-board. While these Burmese plans were maturing king Chakrap'at of Siam captured a number of elephants including seven white elephants. The elephants were meant for strengthening the defence of his realm, but being a possessor of so many white elephants he assumed the title of "Lord of the White Elephants". The king of Burma now found a good pretext to precipitate war with Ayuthia. He sent envoys to king Chakrap'at demanding two of the white elephants, but got a negative reply. This was what he had expected to his advantage.

In the autumn of A.D. 1563 Bayin Naung marched with a vast army to invade Ayuthia by the route of Chieng-mai collecting more troops from that country. He led the army via Kamp'engp'et and Sukhot'ai subjugating both. Sawank'alok
and P'ichai easily submitted. The Burmese king passed through P'itsamulok, a country ravaged by famine and pesti­lence, and made its Governor Maha T'ammaraaja accompany him with a force of 70,000 men. Thus making a clean sweep over northern and central Siam the Burmese reached Ayuthia in February 1564. The forces under king Chakrap'at were no match for the numerically much more superior army of the king of Burma. When the Burmese commenced the attack both the nobles and the general population of Ayuthia realized the futility of resistance and therefore pressed the king to come to terms with the Burmese king. Accordingly when the two kings met for peace talks the Burmese king demanded immediate delivery of four white elephants instead of the original two and payment by Siam of an annual tribute of thirty elephants together with a large quantity of silver. He also exacted certain customs rights. Further it is said that king Chakrap'at of Siam, his queen and his younger son were taken away as captives by the Burmese, and the Crown Prince Bra Nahein (Prince Nahein) was proclaimed and installed as a vassal king of Siam. But Prince Damrong gives strong reasons to show that this statement in the Burmese history is wrong. In fact, king Chakrap'at continued to rule and Bayin Naung, being informed of a serious Mon rebellion in his country, hurried back to Pegu by way of Kamp'engp'et leaving

69 "Burmese Invasions of Siam" in JSS, V, 1908, I, pp. 21-29. It may be noted that according to the Burmese history, the date of the first Burmese invasion of Siam is A.D. 1548, but in the Pali Chronicle of Siam, it is A.D. 1563. The second Burmese invasion is dated A.D. 1563.
an army of occupation in Siam and probably giving a controlling hand to Maha T'hammaraja, Prince Ramasuen of Siam, who accompanied the Burmese king, died of illness on the way. The Raja of Patani, who came to the assistance of King Chakrap'at with an army and a fleet of two hundred boats during the Burmese invasion, arrived after the Burmese had left, but finding the Siamese king ill-equipped for defence after the Burmese attack suddenly revolted and attempted to seize the throne. King Chakrap'at, who had to flee from the palace for the time being, succeeded in putting down the rebellion.

An event of importance which became a cause of extreme bitterness between King Sett'at'irat of the Laos kingdom and Maha T'hammaraja, son-in-law and Governor of P'itsanulok, both related to the House of Ayuthia, needs mention here. King Sett'at'irat, soon after establishing his new capital at Wieng-Chan, asked for the hand of Princess T'ep Krasatri, daughter of King Chakrap'at by Queen Suriyot'ai of historic fame, although he had already married one daughter of the same king. At the appointed time fixed for Princess T'ep Kasatri's journey to Wieng-Chan she fell ill and hence King Chakrap'at sent another daughter by another wife to the Laos king. Then came the Burmese invasion of northern Siam and Ayuthia during 1563-64 blocking all communications between the Laos kingdom and Ayuthia. But when the communications were restored after February, 1564, Sett'at'irat returned the newly sent princess of Ayuthia and insisted on sending Princess T'ep Krasatri.
The Pro-Durmanese Governor, Maha T'amaraja, kept the Burmese king informed of all these developments. In April 1564, when Princess T'ep Krasatri was on her way to Vieng-Chan, she was intercepted by a Burmese force near P'etchabun and carried off to Burma. Since then Maha T'amaraja became the most hated enemy of Sattat'irat.

Reaching Pegu, Bayin Naung found to his dismay that the whole city with his palace was burnt down by the Mon rebels aided by the Shan and Siamese prisoners who had been settled in the province. By a vigorous handling of the situation with the help of his army he put down the rebellion and captured thousands of those who took part in it. He would have burnt them all alive had not the Buddhist priests intervened. He rebuilt the capital and his palace even more magnificently than before using at places gold plates for the roofs. The richness of the city is also described by two European writers, Caesar Frederico of Venice and Ralph Fitch of England, who saw it in its most prosperous condition.

In the later part of the year 1564 Bayin Naung discovered a move on the part of Mekuti to throw off the Burmese overlordship. He therefore sent an expedition under his son and heir-apparent Nanda Bayin against Chiang-mai. Mekuti fled to Vieng-Chan and Chiang-mai was occupied by the Burmese, who thereafter followed Mekuti to the kingdom.

70 This account, says Wood, is contained in two oldest versions of Siamese history.
of Luang P'rabang and occupied Vieng-Chan. Sett'at'irat had left the capital. The Burmese captured Mekut'i and also the queen and Oupahat (or Ouparat) or heir-apparent but they failed to capture its king who exhausted them by guerilla warfare. With the prisoners the Burmese returned to Chieng-mai, where they appointed Princess Maha T'ewi as Regent for the second time with a Burmese garrison stationed there and then reached Pegu in October 1565.

In Siam towards the close of the year 1565 king Chakrap'at placed his son Prince Mahin as Regent and himself retired into private life. But the Laos king Sett'at'irat, by his successful defiance of Burmese imperialism, aroused hopes in other Tai rulers, who, with all their traditions of the past, were restive under the Burmese. It was only the strange conduct of Maha T'ammara that caused a temporary set-back to the growth of a strong front among them capable of overthrowing the Burmese domination. Prince Mahin was bent towards the Laos king for support. But Maha T'ammara became the watch-dog for his Burmese master and opposed every measure of Prince Mahin if it was thought to be anti-Burmese. P'ya Ram, Governor of Kamp'engp'et, wanted to get rid of the Burmese and hated the Raja of Pitsamulok for his pro-Burmese policy. The Regent, Prince Mahin, appointed P'ya Ram as his chief adviser, who initiated a policy of

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71 According to Hall Prince Mahin was appointed Regent by Rayin Naung before returning to Burma after the second invasion of Siam in 1564 and was placed under the control of the pro-Burmese Raja of Pitsamulok, Maha T'ammara. See H- E Asia, pp. 214-15. This would be doubtful if King Chakrap'at was not taken as hostage to Burma. This
alliance with the Laos king and inviting the latter to
attack P'itsanulok. When these were done, Sett'at'irat at
the end of 1566 marched on P'itsanulok at the head of a
large army and invested the city. According to plan Prince
Mahnin moved from the south with a strong force and a fleet
of boats extensively to the assistance of Maha T'asmaraaja
but actually to help his northern ally to take the city.
The reports of the attack by Sett'at'irat having reached
Burma earlier, a Burmese army had already arrived and re­
lieved the siege driving off the Laos back to Vieng-Chan
and defeated Prince Mahin and destroyed his fleet.

In July 1567 king Chakrap'at became a Buddhist
monk. Maha T'asmaraaja now became strong enough to demand the
surrender of P'ya Ram. The Prince Regent refused to comply
with his demand. Maha T'asmaraaja then visited Burma probably
to report the adamant attitude of the Siamese Regent and in
doing so he undoubtedly agreed to serve as a vassal Raja of
Burma, for the Burmese king conferred upon him the title of
Chao Phya Song K'we. During his absence there were certain
secret communications between Prince Mahin and Princess
Wisut Krasatri, wife of Maha T'asmaraaja, at P'itsanulok. It
is said with her children she was brought to Ayuthia as
a hostage against any possible action against Siam . . . by her
husband. Prince Mahin also made a misadventure against
Kampgangp'at then under Burmese control. Prince Mahin was from
the beginning a weak and incompetent ruler betraying only his
incapacity to deal with every big problem. Anticipating another
Burmese invasion he invited Chakrap'at back to the throne and
relinquished his charge. In December 1569 Bayin Naung himself marched with an army which is said to be the largest ever landed on the soil of Siam. This huge mass of troops set out from Martaban and passed through P'itsanulok towards Ayuthia, which was determined to resist. The pro-Burmese Maha T'ammaraja, as expected, accompanied Bayin Naung to the attack. Bayin Naung failed to take the city by storm. He laid siege to it as the alternative course. King Chakrap'at died of illness in January 1569 during the siege at the age of sixty-two. A force was sent by Sett'at'irat to fight the Burmese on the side of his ally, but it was attacked and beaten off. King Mahin, who succeeded to the throne again on the death of his father, proved utterly incompetent and irresponsible in the matter of conducting the defence. P'ya Ram and a few other nobles alone really fought and proved their mettle by inflicting severe losses on the enemy. The siege lasted about nine months until in August 1569 the city fell, not as a result of defeat in the fight but through treachery of the King of Burma. When the city's defences could not be broken through even after a protracted siege Bayin Naung caused his puppet, Maha T'ammaraja, to secretly write to his wife, then at Ayuthia, accusing P'ya Ram, the virtual leader of the defence, as the instigator of the war and assuring peace simply if he was delivered up to

73 Hall says that the captive king Chakrap'at was allowed to return to Siam on a pilgrimage in 1567. This was a policy to pacify Siam. But on reaching Ayuthia the pilgrim threw off the yellow robe and joined Prince Mahin in another attack on P'itsanulok. See S-E Asia, p. 215. Probably the removal of Princess Visut Krasatri to Ayuthia as a hostage is referred to by this second attack on P'itsanulok.
the Burmese. This was enough for the foolish and spineless
king Mahān to play into the hands of the enemy. He surrendered
P'ya Hm and with it the defence collapsed. He also ordered
the execution of another bright and brave fighter, his tender-
aged brother Prince Sri Saraja, his fault being his siding
with the defence party. With all these suicidal acts he got
no quarter from the Burmese monarch. He and all the members
of the royal family were taken away as captives to Burma. To-
gether with a vast concourse of prisoners and a large number
of cannon. King Mahān died of fever on the way. Before
leaving Ayuthia Kayin Naung placed on its throne his puppet
Mahā T'ammaraja who was to rule as a vassal of Burma. At the
formal coronation, which Kayin Naung attended, Mahā T'ammaraja
assumed the title of P'ra Sri Sarap'et, but he was better known
as King Mahā T'ammaraja. The Burmese levelled down the defences
of the city so as to cripple the Siamese power to resist them in
future, but exposing the city to other enemies.

For the next fifteen years Siam remained under
Burmese tutelage. Thus the Burmese having enormous control over
Siam made, among others, two changes of major significance
during this period in the system of Siamese Law and in the
prevailing Siamese Era. First many Burmese laws and institutions
were imposed upon the Siamese and the Burmese Dhammātathà,74
based on the Law of Manu, was also introduced and grafted on

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74 Introduced into Burma by Cematu of Pegu in the 13th century A.D. A later version was prepared in the reign of T'ada T'ammaraja or Thalun (1629-48), brother of Anukpetlan (grand-son of Kayin Naung) of Toungoo.
to the Siamese law, though at present the Siamese have freed themselves almost wholly from Manu's paralysing influence. Secondly, the Burmese Era beginning in A.D. 638 was introduced into Siam where it came to be called Chulasekarat or Little Era replacing the prevailing Mahasakarat Era. The Mahasakarat was introduced in southern India by Kanishka in A.D. 78. It is believed that it was introduced into Siam and Cambodia by Kanishka's missionaries. Chulasekarat continued to be used officially until 1867 when King Chulalongkorn adopted the European calendar.

The only Tai king, who was still reigning as a sovereign ruler and successfully defied the greatest Burmese conqueror, was Sett'at'irat of Vieng-Chan. This fact gave Bayin Naung no mental rest. He therefore directed his arms the very next year, A.D. 1569, to the invasion of the Laos kingdom. But Sett'at'irat frustrated his desperate attempt to take Vieng-Chan by a kind of mobile tactics creating artificial scarcity of supplies and compelled the Burmese troops exhausted by famine and disease to beat a retreat. In A.D. 1571 Sett'at'irat, while engaged in a war in Cambodia, was untraced. His infant son was placed on the throne and one P'ya Sri Suren K'wang Fa appointed Regent. Bayin Naun wanted Sett'at'irat's brother, the Upahat, who had been a hostage in Burma since A.D. 1565, should come back and succeed Sett'at'irat as a vassal ruler under Burma. The Burmese envoys sent with this humiliating proposal to Vieng-Chan were murdered

76 Wood: ibid.
77 The name is given as General Sene Soulint'a by Hall.
by the Lao gens. This precipitated a second flare-up.

Bayin Neung despatched his Mon Commander-in-chief with 'an army composed of levies drawn from Chiengmai and Siam' to attack Vieng-Chan. It was defeated and the Mon Commander is believed to have been punished with death or exile by the Burmese monarch. In the dry season of A.D. 1574 the King of Burma himself undertook the invasion and made Prince Narasuen of Siam, the elder son of King Naha T'ammaraja, accompany him. Prince Narasuen fell ill with small-pox on the way to Vieng-Chan and was left behind with his Siamese auxiliaries to return home. Vieng-Chan was taken; the Regent driven out, young Prince Nokes Koumane captured, and Cupahat placed on the throne as a vassal of Burma. Bayin Neung's dream was fulfilled, however short, and the eastern limits of the Lao kingdom marked also the extreme limits to the east attained by Bayin Neung's Empire. He returned to Burma with Prince Nokes as hostage.

But from A.D. 1575 to 1592 there was no stability in the Lao kingdom. A series of revolts broke out and the Cupahat could not control the situation. In A.D. 1581 Bayin Neung died and his son Nanda Bayin ascended the Burmese throne immediately to fight the powerful disintegrating forces of his empire at work. In A.D. 1591 the leading monks of the Lao kingdom represented to Nanda Bayin that if peace was to be restored the legitimate heir, Prince Nokes, be returned for the throne and under Siamese pressure it was readily complied with. In A.D. 1592 Prince Nokes Koumane formally succeeded to the
throne of Vieng-Chan and united Luang P'rabang which in the meantime separated itself. After having firmly settled the government he proclaimed the independence of the kingdom.

The destruction of Ayuthia offered an opportunity to King Boromaraja of Cambodia to invade Siam in A.D. 1569, but the Cambodians suffered a bad defeat contrary to their expectations and retired. This was a good ground without Burmese opposition to reconstruct the defences of Ayuthia and also to purchase heavy arms, such as cannon, from the Portuguese. Haha T'ammaraaja felt deep aversion to Burmese subjection. He had two sons. The elder P'ra Naret (i.e. Prince Naresuen), called Black Prince, was a brilliant general and clever; the younger Prince Ekatotsarat, called White Prince, was a man of peace, unwarlike and to the foreigners a 'concious man'. P'ra Naret earlier proved his perfect general-ship by putting down a rebellion of the Shan State of Huang Hun for Burma which the Burmese generals failed. The Burmese Court looked upon his talents as a future menace to Burma and conspired to kill him. In A.D. 1584, when the Prince of Ava revolted Nandas Rayan invited P'ra Naret to help him, but employing two Peguan nobles to meet and kill the Prince on the way to Burma at a place called Huang K'reng. The nobles moved by his personality divulged the plot to him. P'ra Naret at once held a conference of his Generals and the Peguan officials at Huang K'reng and declared the independence Siam in May 1584. Border populations soon joined him and he marched on Pegu and laid siege to the city, but withdrew when the news of the defeat of Ava's Prince arrived.
Muang R'ong Declaration and the siege of Pegu

terribly upset Nanda Bayin on return from Ava. He immediately
sent an army after P'ra Naret headed by the Crown Prince. The
Siamese Prince inflicted a crushing defeat on the Burmese on
the banks of the Sittang, and himself shot dead the Burmese
General, Surakarna, with the Siamese Prince came away from
Burma large numbers of Shan prisoners to P'itsenulok. Nanda
Bayin failed to take back the prisoners even by sending a
force which was beaten back. Only two Governors, those of
Sawankhalok and Phichai, remained loyal to the Burmese king
in fear of punishment. The Black Prince stormed these cities
and executed both the Governors. Nothing succeeds like success.
For the first time Cambodia voluntarily formed an alliance with
Siam and even helped the latter with an army to attack Chiang-
mai.

As his eastern dominions were being wrested from his
hands by the rising star, the Black Prince, Nanda Bayin made a
big-scale preparation for the invasion of Siam. He was to be
joined by the Governor of Chiang-mai, Tharawadi Lin, and the
Governor of Sukhottai. In December 1534 Nanda Bayin marched on
Ayuthia across the Three Pagodas Pass, but the energetic Black
Prince inflicted a number of defeats on the Burmese and drove
them off across the frontiers. The Chiang-mai army which arrived
late at Chainat met with a similar fate and retired. Nanda Bayin
made the Governor of Chiang-mai responsible for the defeat and

79. Hall says Muenam valley, but the musket used by
P'ra Naret in this action was known as "the Musket of the Battle
of the Sittaung River." - Wood; op. cit., p.133.
ordered him to attack Siam again and the Crown Prince was sent to his aid. Wood refers to Chiang-mai annals as saying thus, "In the year 947 (1585-6) the king of Burma ordered Chiang-mai to attack Ayuthia. When the Chiang-mai army got near Ayuthia, the Siamese defeated and scattered them. This defeat is not mentioned in the Burmese history. Nanda Dayin planned a fresh invasion of Siam for which an army of 250,000 men was made ready. The Black Prince was prepared for it. He stocked enough food and ordered the destruction of what could not be harvested. In January 1537, the Burmese made a three-pronged attack on Ayuthia. The Black and the White Princes resisted with wonderful vigour and fortitude inflicting disproportionately heavy losses in men and material on the invaders who also ran short of rations and suffered from sickness. With no hope of victory Nanda Dayin raised the siege and retired to Buma. He, relieved of the Burmese siege, also drove out the Cambodians, who, under King Satt'ea, tried to stab Siam from behind by an attack in disregard of the basic agreement of alliance. The Black Prince, whose personality and genius regained independence for Siam by setting at naught the Burmese might, eminently deserves to be called Prince Heresuen, the Great.

In A.D. 1530 King Lehia T'umaraja died and P'ra Narot became King of Siam as King Heresuen at the age of thirty-five. He appointed his brother Prince Khat'otaroat Lehia Uparat.\(^80\) Siam's

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80 The first appointment of 'Leha Uparat' or Crown Prince is known to have been made, according to Wood, in the Siamese history in A.D. 1455 by King Trahol of Siam. The idea was borrowed from India. Leha Uparat, says Wood, held 40,000 acres of land or ten times as much as the highest officials.
liberation encouraged a series of revolts in the Shan States against the Burmese. Nanda Bayin, therefore, wanted anyhow to curb Siam's power and twice invaded Siam with very large armies. But the Burmese were defeated by King Naresuen and his brother who killed several Burmese princes including the Crown Prince in combat. Nanda Bayin lost all hope of conquering Siam. Thrills of the personal combats of these Siamese war leaders are described in the annals. For lagging behind in the charge in the second of the above two Burmese wars two reputed Siamese generals, Chao P'ya Chakri and P'ya P'pak'lang, were despatched by the king for capturing Tavoy and Tenasserim from the Burmese, those being Siamese dominions from the time of Ram Kambhong but lost to the Burmese in A.D. 1568 with the fall of Ayuthia. The Generals advanced in A.D. 1593 and annexed both the areas by defeating the Burmese on land and in a number of naval engagements. The towns of Tavoy and Tenasserim were important centres of foreign trade. In the same year King Ramesuen made a drive against Cambodia and occupied Battambang. The Cambodian king fled to Luang P'rabang and his brother Prince Sri Sup'arma, placed on the throne with a Siamese army of 6,000 men, remained a faithful vassal of Siam until his death in A.D. 1618. Wood says he introduced in Cambodia 'Siamese customs, garb and ceremonial'. After A.D. 1592 Siam under Ramesuen played the aggressor against Burma, brought under its control the whole of Pegu by A.D. 1604 and took under protection the Shan States of Hsen-Wi, Mong-Hong and Mong-Mai. The rest of the nineteen Shan States became virtually free. Meanwhile Chieng-nai, which had become split into two parts, was reduced
to vassalage and the Siamese boundary reached the frontiers of China.

Next King Ekat'otsarat was less prone to wars and more interested in working for the financial stability of the kingdom. He allowed many Japanese to settle in Siam and even had bodyguards from amongst them. It is said that these Japanese later massacred officials, sacked Ayuthia and departed with treasures.

With the accession of the Alaungp'aya or Konbtsung Dynasty in Burma in A.D. 1752 there were serious threats to the eastern Tai kingdoms. Alaungp'aya's ambition was to revive the glories of Bayin Naung. He sent a punitive expedition against the raiding Manipuris creating havoc amongst them, received the submission of the Shan States and completed the conquest of the Mons. His last enterprise was the invasion of Siam on the pretext that the Siamese refused to surrender Mon rebels who had gone to their country for refuge. He swept northward over Tevoy and Tenaseurim and encircled Ayuthia in A.D. 1760. Boromaraja V (Ekat'at) was then the king of Siam. During the siege which was directed by Alaungp'aya himself an explosion from a siege gun mortally wounded him. Neither were the Burmese prepared for a long siege. The siege was abandoned and the Burmese went back to their country. It was left for the third king Neinhyushin (1763-76), son of Alaungp'aya, to complete the unfinished task.

In A.D. 1765 the Burmese armies made a three-pronged drive on Ayuthia, one from Chiang-mai, the second from the Three Pagodas Pass and the third from the south
occupying Mangrai, Tonasserim and the whole of Siamese territory in Malay. The column marching from the south was held in check only by the redoubtable half-Chinese General, P'ya Taksin. But when the Burmese closed in upon the capital the Siamese Generals had to fight for its defence. The historic assault was delivered in February 1766. "While the Burmese, scattered over all the provinces, were carrying on a war against men and nature", says H. Turpin, "the King (Nat'at) and his superstitious ministers put all their trust in their magicians. The officers and soldiers followed their example and consulted them as to how they might render themselves invisible in order to attack the enemy unawares, and the hope of learning a secret so favourable to their cowardly nature, prevented them from going out to fight before it had been revealed to them." There is a substratum of truth in this statement, otherwise except P'ya Taksin's no real resistance was offered on other fronts until the blow fell on the capital. Even small settlements of the Christians with their churches succeeded in most cases in protecting their properties by defeating the Burmese raiders. At one place the Portuguese sabred a crowd of Burmese who had attempted to storm their college and drove them off. Not that the Siamese inherently lacked courage, but were steeped in superstition which undermined their vigour and initiative. The chief

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61 P'ya Taksin in Burmese history. His father was half-Chinese and mother Thai.
63 Ibid., pp.163-64.
characteristic of Burmese invasions was always their inordinate greed for loot and for that they resorted to all manner of barbaric tortures.

The Burmese made good arrangements for supplies and reinforcements arrived after the rains. There was a difference between the king and P'ya Taksin who incurred displeasure for firing some of the cannon at the enemy without waiting for royal permission. The General then forced his way out with 300 brave followers and took refuge at Rayong on the Gulf of Siam. The city fell on April 7, 1767 under violent attack with cannon fire from all sides. The Burmese carried out its complete destruction, the palace, principal buildings and thousands of private houses being burnt to ashes. The King's mortal remains are said to have been found at the royal gate. There was a great sack. The townsfolk irrespective of age and sex were flogged and tortured to make over their treasures or savings. They burnt the soles of their feet in order to make them reveal where they had concealed their wealth. Rape and plunder became the order of the day. Gold images of the gods were melted down for the metal. All books on Siamese history and culture and other records were consumed by the fire set to them by the enemy. This Burmese vandalism will ever remain a blight in the history of the race. Glutted with Siamese treasures the Burmese returned home with a large number of captives including some members of the royal family and high officials.

only to face a Chinese invasion under General Ming Jui, which threatened Ava, the Burmese capital. Early in A.D. 1769 the situation in Burma became critical.

P'ya Taksin seized this opportunity to make a drive for the liberation of Burmese dominated areas. He soon established his control over the neighboring districts of the north with his small force and captured Chantabun in June 1767. This success drew around him thousands of followers. In October, with a fleet of boats, he sailed up the Menam and attacked T'anaburi opposite Bangkok and occupied it. Its Governor Mai T'ang-In, a renegade Siamese, appointed by the Burmese authorities was captured and executed. A force was despatched against P'ya Taksin from the main camp of the Burmese army of occupation at Three Be Trees close to Ayuthia. The Siamese section of the force deserted and joined P'ya Taksin who pursued the rest and delivered a fierce attack on the camp winning a complete victory.

But for this portion of the Siamese territory the rest was then split up into four independent kingdoms. The Governor of Nakon Sritammarat assumed the title of King Musika and ruled over the Peninsular provinces. Korat and the eastern provinces were under a son of King Mahabandara of Siam, Phitsanulok was under King Buang who was its Governor previously. The extreme north was made into a theocratic kingdom of Fang by a vicious Buddhist monk, Ratamuri was still under Burmese control. But P'ya Taksin assumed royal power and established his capital at Dhanburi on the west bank of the river Menam instead of
at the ruined city of Ayuthia whose reconstruction would have been costlier and started his campaigns for the reunification of Siam. He had no rest, but he achieved the goal of reuniting Siam by defeating the monarchs of the dismembered country and ousting the Burmese. In the north General Chao P'ya Chakri distinguished himself by repulsing the Burmese in a series of engagements when the latter made yet further attempts through Chiang-mai during 1775-6 to reconquer Siam, the last major attack being led by the famous Burmese General, Mahe Thibathura. Earlier some of the Burmese generals went over to Chao P'ya Chakri and enacted a great slaughter of the Burmese, who then fled in disorder across the frontier and Chiang-mai fell into the hands of the Siamese. Overwhelmed monarch Narai once again tried to stab Siam in the back when P'ya Taksin was busy in his northern campaign. P'ya Taksin retaliated by driving him out and placing his rival Rama Thibodi on the throne as a vassal of Siam.

In A.D. 1777 Chao P'ya Chakri crushed another rebellion in Khorat and executed the rebel leader. When he returned to Bangkok from this expedition he was given the rank of a Royal Prince with the title of "Supreme Varlord". About this time King Taksin under enormous strain developed insanity and the direction of affairs passed more and more into the hands of General Chakri.

After certain rebellions were put down General Chao P'ya Chakri assumed the crown with popular support with
the title of Rama T'ibodi or King Rama I (1782-1809).

'To ensure the internal tranquillity of the country', says Wood, 'all the principal officials urged Chao P'ya Chakri to agree to the death of the ex-King; he finally accepted their counsel, and King Taksin was executed'. King Taksin was then forty-eight and ruled over the whole of the former Kingdom of Ayuthha without Tavoy and Tenasserim and was suzerain over most of the Lao States, including Luang P'rabang. He was one of the most remarkable figures in Siamese history, who, from a humble position as a leader of a guerilla band, reunited on a firm footing a completely shattered kingdom within the space of a decade and a half. King Rama I founded modern Bangkok as the capital of Siam and with it the modern period of Siam begins. Since then the kings of the Chakri Dynasty have been ruling over Siam to this day.

As regards the Laos kingdom it was split up into two independent but mutually hostile States in A.D. 1707 with capitals at Vieng-Chan and Luang P'rabang. When Alaung-p'aya, the Burmese conqueror (1752-60), marched eastwards Vieng-Chan saved herself by helping the Burmese to conquer Luang P'rabang. In A.D. 1778 the Siamese General Chulalok captured Vieng-Chan and carried off the Emerald Buddha to Bangkok which was afterwards installed in a temple within the palace precincts. Since A.D. 1782 the State of Vieng-Chan remained a vassal of Siam. But in consequence of an aggressive attack by the vassal ruler Anou of Vieng-Chan on Bangkok in 1827 the Siamese devastated it and kept the kingdom
under their control. Later history is one of adjustments of boundaries between Siam and the French and British controlled areas. The French expansion in Tonking became a matter of grave concern for Siam and when in 1881 Vietnam was reduced to a French protectorate, King Chulalongkorn of Siam sent strong reinforcements to defend Luang P'rabang up to the basin of the Black River. Luang P'rabang had been under Siamese suzerainty for about a century and in the French official maps it was shown as part of Siam until 1886. The French authorities, by appointing Auguste Pavie as Vice-consul in the Laos capital on May 7 of that year, also indirectly recognized Siamese suzerainty over that State. The famous Pavie missions, particularly the second one of 1890, were for exploration and scientific study of the geography of the Laos country and to 'produce a definite statement on the nature and value of the products of the Mekong basin'. But their ultimate object was 'to pave the way for another big annexation of territory by France'. The French demanded all the territory east of the middle Mekong as Annam, now their protectorate, had 'incontestable rights' over it. The presence of Siamese authority there was dubbed as an invasion by Pavie. After prolonged disputes and a clash with the French warships at Paknam resulting in casualties to both sides, Siam in 1893 had to yield with payment of indemnity and the French blockade was called off. Yet pending the Siamese evacuation of the east bank of the Mekong the French occupied Chantabun. Under the Anglo-French agreement of January 1906 Hong-Sing went to France and both countries guaranteed the independence of the Henam Valley, other parts of

Siam being excluded from the scope of the agreement by a Franco-
Siamese treaty of 1904 Siam renounced her rights over Luang Phra-
bang and France evacuated Chantaburi. By further agreements sub-
sequently boundaries between Siam and British and French terri-
tories were adjusted stage by stage until we have the present maps.

The kingdom of Laos with 17,00,000 population became
independent of France in 1954. To-day it possesses a democratic
form of government and a king who lives in the Royal Capital at
Luang Phabang, the Administrate Capital being Vientiane. Laos
is under-developed in every respect. In recent years there have
been internal troubles between Laos under royal control and the
north (Samneua and Phongsaly) under communist dominated Pathet
Laos. The things have not yet come under settled conditions by a
complete unification of the country.

In Siam the early years of the Chakri dynasty were marked
by frequent but indecisive wars with Burma and by expeditions to
the northern Malay States over which Siam claimed suzerainty. These
wars came to an end in the middle of the nineteenth century after
the annexation of Burma by the British. King Mongkut (1851-68) first
opened the door for European influence by the treaty of Friendship
and Commerce with Britain in 1855. Sir John Bowring from England
played the main role in it and occupied a key position in shaping
Siam's foreign relations and concluding treaties for her with
European powers. Mongkut had a group of Europeans around him -
Bishop Pallegoix, Caswell and Bradley - from whom he learnt astrono-
ymy, mathematics, English and Latin. He employed Europeans to
reorganize the government services. A distinguished Belgian lawyer,
Rolin-Jaquemins, reformed the legal system and Major Cerini of
Italy organized the military cadet school. Unlike other orienta-
monarchs Mongkut had the unique foresight to set the process of a silent revolution along European lines and in it he utilized the best available European talents. It was during the reign of Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) that the greatest development and modernization of the country took place. Employing British experts he placed the country's finances and the fiscal system on a sound basis. Princes educated in Europe, undertook reforms in the education and judicial systems. Chulalongkorn abolished debt slavery, reformed Court etiquette, established many kinds of modern scientific, technical and research institutions and the Civil Service.

Until 1932 Siam was an absolute monarchy. The successful coup d'état of 24 June, planned by a group of foreign-educated young civilians under the leadership of Luang Pradit Manudharma, transformed it into a constitutional monarchy. The Constitution, signed by King Prajadhipok (1925-35) on 10 December 1932, provided that sovereign power emanated from the Siamese nation and the king was to exercise the legislative power by and with the consent of the Assembly of People's Representatives, the executive power through the Council of Ministers, and the judicial power through the Courts duly established by law. The existence of a comparatively large standing army, coupled with contests between personalities, and not any major differences in policy, is at the root of the recent crises and governmental changes in Thailand. Yet she preserves her freedom and prosperity more through diplomatic tact than by the power of her arms.